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# MR. DONNELLY'S REVIEWERS

BY

WILLIAM D. O'CONNOR.

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Note.

# In Memoriam.

During the progress of these pages through the press, the author, William D. O'Connor, Assistant General Superintendent of the Life-Saving Service, passed suddenly away from the conflicts and controversies of life. He had suffered for a long time from partial paralysis. He was regarded as a confirmed sufferer, and the announcement of his death at Washington on the morning of May 9, 1887, came as a sad surprise to a wide circle of admiring friends. Mr. O'Connor was an enthusiast in the work in which he was engaged. He was very proud of his department of the Government service, and often spoke hopefully of a time when shipwrecks on the American coast would be almost impossible.

There can be no doubt that if Mr. O'Connor had devoted himself wholly to literature he would have made more than a common mark. As it is, he has left behind him more than one powerful contribution to the current controversy on the Baconian authorship of the "Shakspearean plays." He took issue with the late Richard Grant White on this question, and made most chivalrous appeals in

defense of Delia Bacon and Mrs. Potts. Of "Hamlet's Note-book," one of his most effective pieces of work, a critic says: "This book — whether one believes in Bacon as the author of 'Shakspeare's Plays' or not—is as fine a piece of rhetorical special pleading as the annals of controversial literature will show."

These pages, the last literary effort of his life, prove how earnestly he could champion a cause, how steadfastly he could defend a man whom he thought to have been unfairly dealt with.

Speaking of Mr. O'Connor's personal qualities, Mr. Henry Latchford says:

"From time to time, in the afternoon, I called at his office in the Treasury Building, and helped him down stairs and to the street cars on Pennsylvania avenue. He always had something delightfully original to say on any subject. . . . . I had heard O'Connor spoken of in Dublin, London, Paris and Boston as 'a spirit finely touched.' It is almost impossible to describe the charm of his presence, his character, his voice, grey eyes, silken yellow hair and his wonderful conversation. But it is possible for those of us who knew him to say that when so much high endeavor, such splendid intellect, such wide sympathies, and such a gentle voice have been embodied in one human being, the death of this rare person means that 'there has passed away a glory from the earth.'"

# MR. DONNELLY'S REVIEWERS.

## I.

In the opening pages of the little volume on Bacon-Shakespeare matters, entitled *Hamlet's Note-Book*, which the present writer published a couple of years ago, the question was raised whether reviews are of any real advantage to literature — whether they are not, on the contrary, a serious detriment, mainly because they have the power, through the facile medium of current journals and periodicals, to give a book a bad name in advance, and, by deterring readers, either absolutely prevent or greatly delay its recognition. Just in proportion to the depth or worth of the book, is this what is likely to happen to it.

The case under consideration at the time was that of Mrs. Constance M. Pott's edition of the *Promus*, which, until then, had been Lord Bacon's only unpublished manuscript. As such, it was of evident value, but it had become doubly so because Mrs. Pott had illustrated its sixteen hundred sentences by parallel passages from the Shakespeare drama, nearly all of which were plainly in relation, and a great number actually identical in thought and terms. As the *Promus* was a private note-book of Bacon's, antedating most of the plays, and as the man William Shakspere, could not possibly have had access to it, the significance of the coincidences established by the parallels in such quantities is apparent

to any candid mind, and the book was, therefore, of exceptional importance. Nevertheless, Mr. Richard Grant White so reviewed it in the *Atlantic Monthly* when it appeared, as to create the conviction, aided by the journals which followed his lead, that it was a work of lunacy, and to actually arrest its circulation. At the time he did this, he himself, as I have had since the best authority for knowing, had become a secret convert to the Baconian theory, and despised and loathed the Stratford burgher with a sort of rancor—a fact which his papers on the *Anatomization of Shakespeare* sufficiently indicate. The lack of international copyright as an existing evil, is less to be mourned than the cold-hearted surrender of literature to the tribe of Jack the Ripper, involved in cases like these. There are bitter hours when we could well yearn for the spacious days when authors had only to get past the official censorship, bad as it was, and face the free judgment of the public, without the perennial intervention of the gangs of ignorant and impudent men, self-styled reviewers. It was that warm, spontaneous, disinterested popular judgment that gave welcome to the works we know as Cervantes and Calderon, Dante and Rabelais, Moliere and Shakespeare, and saw them securely lodged in eternal favor, before any banded guild of detraction could exist to fret their authors' spirits, check their genius, or lessen them beforehand in public interest and honor. What would the modern reviewers have done to them?

The worthlessness of the critical verdicts of this century, in which they first began, is measured by the fame of the works they once assailed. It would

be difficult to name any cardinal book that upon its appearance was not belittled, censured or condemned by the literary authorities of the periodicals. Every one of the great British poets, from Scott to Tennyson, had to run the gauntlet of abuse and denial, and received his meed of praise, after long waiting, only from the slow justice of the common reader. It is true that the intelligent critics who disparaged and reviled the entire galaxy, including Keats, Shelley, Coleridge, Wordsworth and Byron, closed up with astonishing unanimity in roaring eulogy on Alexander Smith, who certainly was a memorable geyser of splendid metaphors, but is now almost forgotten. In France, Victor Hugo, altogether supreme among the geniuses of modern Europe, an instance almost unexampled in literature of demiurgic power and splendor, was so derided and denounced for years by these men, that at one time, so George Sand tells us, he nearly resolved in his despair to lay down his pen forever. George Sand herself, the greatest without exception of all the women that ever wrote, whose works have changed the tone of the civilized world in respect to womankind, and who has insensibly altered every statute book in Europe and America in favor of her sex, was for many years, and is even at times now, seen only through the reviewers' tempestuous veiling of mud for darkness and bilge water for rain. Her great romance, *Consuelo*, which, were the image not too small, might be compared for purity to the loveliest new-blown rose, glittering with the dew of dawn—a book whose central character is the very essence of noble womanliness, kindred in art to Murillo's Virgin—was made for

years the very synonym of infamy. Her exquisite idyl of village life in France, *La petite Fadette*, I saw once in translation here disguised under the title of *Funchon*, and the author's name withheld from the title page—all for the sake of decency! In one of her novels, *Lelia*, she makes her beautiful heroine, after talking to her lover purely and eloquently of the celestial nature of love, draw his head to her bosom and press upon it her sacred kisses; and I am told that an apparently true-born reviewer, one of her latest French critics, evidently a moral demon, the academician Caro—refers to this incident as a sample of what he calls her "sensual ideality," and holds it up as something dripping with offense and stench and horror! The critical detraction of the marvelous Balzac delayed his success until late in life, and the vital and life-giving dramatic creations of the elder Dumas, with their extraordinary and recondite research, their measureless exuberance of invention, and the unique, jovial humor they have as a distinct element, were ignored or mocked by the mandarins long after their qualities had made them dear to the whole reading world. No variety of books has escaped the injury of this fool system, which sets mediocrity or malignity to arbitrate over talent or genius. Every one can remember the reception given to Buckle's *History of Civilization*, a work of diversified and enormous learning, of fresh and noble views into the life of nations like the opening of new vistas, and among its great merits the quality, inestimable in a book, of breaking up that narcolepsia which even the best reading will induce, and rousing and holding in

animation the mind of the peruser. The misrepresentation and detraction heaped upon it by the critical prints were profuse and incessant until the appearance of the second volume, when its author turned upon his assailants in a lengthy foot note, and like a gallant bull gored an Edinburgh reviewer in a way to make the matadors and picadors alike wary. Who can forget the foaming assaults of the army of reviewing boobies and bigots through which Darwin at length swept in victory to his triumph and his rest behind the rampart of his proud, immortal tomb in the old abbey? On the poetry of Walt Whitman, in which Spirituality appears as the animating soul, creating and permeating every word and every line, as it does every detail, gross or delicate, of the natural world, and whose simple grandeur has entered the spirits of all who are greatest in Europe and this country, the current criticism was long, and until recently, nothing but a storm of brutal pasquinades. As one looks back and sees, by the ultimate triumph of the sterling books in every instance, upon what paltry and fictitious pretenses the indictments upon them must have been made, it becomes more and more a marvel that such an abominable order of tribunals should have ever come into vogue or been so long tolerated.

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## II.

THE latest example in point is the treatment which Mr. Donnelly's extraordinary work, *The Great Cryptogram*, has received from the critics of a number of our leading journals. So much has already been said that it is not necessary to more than briefly

describe the character of this volume. Although nearly a thousand pages in length, it has, by the general admission of its readers, an absorbing interest. The first half contains a formidable argument, supported at every point by copious facts, against Shakspere as the author of the drama affiliated upon his name, and in favor of Lord Bacon; and whatever may be its flaws or defects, every sensible and unbiased mind will consider it masterly. The second part is devoted to the exhibition of the narrative which Mr. Donnelly asserts was interwoven by Bacon, word by word, through the text of the plays. This, so far as the extracts of it given can show, is to be Bacon's autobiography; comprising the history of his relation to the actor and manager Shakspere and to the Shakespeare dramas; to the life of the Elizabethan court; and to the unimultiplex transactions of his time. Of course, though sufficiently ample, a comparatively small part of the marvelous tale is given, for the reason that the labor of a number of years, which even the worst enemies of the book concede to have been stupendous in patience and diligence, did not enable Mr. Donnelly to completely decipher more; and it was to enable himself to finish the work he had begun on two interlocking plays that, forced into print, he decided for prudential reasons connected with the preservation of his copyright to withhold the basic or root numbers of the cipher for the present. With this reservation, the book, perfectly unanswerable in its main argument, was published, and at once, and before it could get to the public, the reviewers of several journals of enormous

circulation and great popular credit fell upon it pell-mell. The pretext given for its critical demolition was that the primary numbers of the cipher had been withheld; and hence it was assumed or argued that Mr. Donnelly must be, at least, a victim of unconscious cerebration or a lunatic, but more probbly and reasonably a fraud, a forger, a cheat, a liar, a swindler and a scoundrel. The singular and striking narrative he had extricated from the text of the plays was declared to be nothing but a cento obtained by picking out the words he wanted and stringing them together as he chose, without any logical connection with the figures he paraded. The brave zealots for the truth who thus exposed him in all his hideous moral deformity, ignored, what any merely thoughtful or candid person would have observed, that, although the basic numbers of the cipher had been withheld, the working numbers which remained showed a uniformity and limitation, which made the idea of imposture not only impossible but perfectly ridiculous, and at the very least, created a tremendous presumption in favor of the reality and validity ofthe cryptogram. But the revilers, in their prepense determination to reduce to nothingness the results of years of weary toil, looked out of sight a still more important consideration. It is manifest that, after all, a great mathematical problem must be decided by an adept in mathematics. If doubt exists in regard to the verity of a complex cryptograph, none but a skilled cryptologist can resolve it. In the case under notice this had been done. Immediately upon the publication of the book Professor Colbert, a distinguished mathematician,

having previously been admitted in confidence to a complete knowledge of all the laws and numbers of the cipher, disclosed or withheld, came out in a lengthy article in the Chicago *Tribune*, a journal of great distinction and circulation, and roundly certified, without any qualification, to the absolute validity and reality of the cryptogram! In view of this decisive scientific judgment, coming from a source unaccused and inaccusable by even the most unscrupulous of the anti-Donnelly banditti, how could any one dare to call the verity and regularity of the cipher into question? And how, in view of the decree of an authority like Professor Colbert, could even the most unprincipled and reckless of the patient scholar's abusers, have had the measureless brass to go the length of covering him with scurril epithets? But the case against the dealers in stigma is even worse than as stated. At about the date of Professor Colbert's finding, Mr. Donnelly, who was then in London, consented, at the solicitation of Mr. Knowles, the editor of the *Nineteenth Century* magazine, a disinterested person, to submit the entire cipher to the judgment of a scientific expert, to be chosen by Mr. Knowles. The selection fell upon Mr. George Parker Bidder, a Queen's Counsel, which is the highest grade of lawyers in Great Britain, and one of the most eminent mathematicians in England. After a careful study, Mr. Bidder reported that Mr. Donnelly had made a great and extraordinary discovery, and that, although the work was not without errors in execution, the existence of the cipher was undeniable. Here, then, was additional and incontestible proof that Mr.

Donnelly's cryptogram was neither a delusion nor a fraud, but a reality. The finding rested now upon the perfect knowledge and unquestioned integrity of two eminent men, widely removed from each other. Under these circumstances it is nothing but folly or impudence in any reviewer to deny evidence which is not based on opinion, but on certainty. The existence of the Baconian cipher in the Shakespeare text, in view of the decision of persons who are authorities, is no longer a hypothesis; it is a fact! Suppose an astronomer should announce, simply by astronomical calculations based on certain phenomena, the existence and locality of a new planet, as Leverrier did in the case of the planet Neptune, subsequently found by Dr. Galle's telescope: a host of people might assert its non-existence, but if Laplace and Herschel said, "We have verified the calculations; the star is there," doubt and debate would end, for the experts had spoken. Nothing after, but to wait until the lens made the discovery. The confirmations of astronomers as to the existence of an undiscovered planet are no more decisive than those of cryptographers as to the existence of an uncompleted cipher.

Subsequent to the decision of Messrs. Colbert and Bidder, two other eminent authorities, after examination, rendered a similar judgment. One of them is Sir Joseph Neale McKenna, a distinguished cryptologist and member of Parliament; at Dublin, the other the Count D'Eckstadt, a celebrated Austrian scholar and diplomat, all his life versed in secret writing as used in European courts.

Of the existence of the scientific decision, supporting the claims of the cipher, the reviewers were well aware, for it was widely published prior to their onslaughts. But what care they for decisions? The purpose of the flippant persifleur or the literary slasher holds against all oracles. These men would have denied algebra, and "reviewed," without mercy, the Arab that devised it.

### III.

I do not wish to include Professor Davidson among them. He was the first to put forth, in two columns of the New York *World* (April 29th, '88), an adverse judgment on the cipher part of Mr. Donnelly's book, and this was prior to the verdict of Professor Colbert and Mr. Bidder. Had he been aware of it, being one who knows what is due to a scientific decree, it might have arrested his action, which I am confident he will yet retract and be sorry for. I withhold an examination of his article, being content to remark that it is manifestly wholly based on suppositions and assumptions, as the reader might have seen, and that these are not borne out by the facts, as I happen to know. More, however, to be regretted than any of his badly-taken points is the haste with which he rushed into print to discredit Mr. Donnelly's volume. His article was dated April 29th, written, of course, at a date still earlier, and the book was issued on the 2d of May following. Thus, for at least three days before publication, he had a clear field with hundreds of thousands of readers, prejudicing them against the book, not only by his plausible statements, but by

his personal distinction as a brilliant and learned man. The blow came from him with double force in view of the fact that he, more than anyone else, had advanced the credit of the cipher by his long and favorable provisional report, based upon a partial investigation in a former issue of *The World*. His later article had, therefore, all the effect of a formal retraction or palinode. This virtual change of front was surely astounding. Some persons have ascribed it to sheer timidity. It may be so, but I sincerely hope not. Certainly he showed valiancy enough when, in his extended report in *The World*, he faced the bitter and silly Shaksperean prejudice, and threw just and favoring light in advance on Mr. Donnelly's magnificent discovery. It is said, however, that Marshal Saxe, queller of armies, would sink into what De Quincey and his English call, "a blue funk," and quake with terror if a mouse appeared in his private chamber; and it may be that at last, with the cipher before him not absolutely proved, and the mountain of Shakspereolatry in full throe on the horizon, Professor Davidson quailed at the prospect of the contemptible small derision that threatened to enter his cloister.

Another critic who deserves to be noticed no less mildly than Professor Davidson, if only out of the respect due to misfortune, is Mr. John J. Jennings, who, at that time, on May 6th, occupied nearly three solid columns of the St. Louis *Post-Despatch* in the effort to establish that the Donnelly cipher is only a simple case of arithmetical progression; that Mr. Donnelly is the deluded victim of his own arithmetic; that the numerical array of cipher figures is really

all mirage; and that as for the cipher itself, like the crater of Vesuvius, according to the *blasé* Sir Charles Coldstream, there is "nothing in it." Voltaire says of Dante, that his obscurity causes him to be no longer understood, adding that he has had commentators, which is perhaps another reason. I will not insist upon any parallel between Mr. Jennings and Dante (the action of the imagination of these two poets being widely different), further than to remark that the mathematical exhibit in Mr. Jennings' article is a decided case of woven darkness; and, as he has been favorably accepted and commented on by several of the intellectual reviewers under notice, it may be that their exegesis has greatly obscured, in my apprehension, the *modus operandi* of his ingenious rebus. Certainly it would seem, by the terms in which his scholiasts interpret and approve his demonstrations, that each of their brains had turned into a pint of small white beans, a condition to which his composition assuredly tends to reduce the minds of all his readers. His general object is to show the utter shallowness and absurdity of Mr. Donnelly in attempting to withhold and conceal his primary or root number, which he declares is perfectly patent, and then, by a series of bewildering little computations, proceeds to expose. The number, he says, is always and everywhere, by all permutations and in all sorts of ways, simply 222, and to this he conjoins in some mysterious fashion, perfectly dumbfoundering to me, what he calls "a beautiful and buoyant little modifier — the figure *one*." When I read all this, it made me think of the equally luminous method by which certain

persons, according to good old Father Rabelais, get at the ages of the heroic and dæmonic cycle. The *curé* of Meudon says in his profuse and jolly manner: "As for the demigods, fauns, satyrs, sylvans, hobgoblins, ægipanes, nymphs, heroes and demons, several men have, from the total sum which is the result of the divers ages calculated by Hesiod, reckoned their life to be nine thousand seven hundred and twenty years; this sum consisting of four special numbers, orderly arising from *one*; the same added together and multiplied by four every way, amounts to forty; these forties being reduced into triangles by five times, make up the total of the aforesaid number." Mr. Jennings' explication of the Donnelly cipher, conceived in all seriousness, though tossed with nonchalant and gay assurance to the public, and culminating in his ubiquitous 222, "orderly arising from one," would perfectly match the dumfoozler of Rabelais if it only had something of its sane mockery. When it first appeared, there were three or four persons in the country, who, knowing Mr. Donnelly's real basic number, must have smiled to the depths of their midriffs at the spectral unreality of the substitute. Weeks later, when Mr. Donnelly, yielding to a general desire, published the root number in question, which was 836, it must have been interesting to see Mr. Jennings' face lengthen at the suddenly disclosed discrepancy between the true figure, and the one he had revealed with such dogmatic confidence, together with its "buoyant and beautiful little modifier — the figure *one*." Perhaps, however, the consciousness that his figment had, in the interim, wrought

some injury to the circulation of the Donnelly volume, may have consoled him for the disaster that had befallen his sapient revelation. That before its refutation or exposure, any part of the population could have been deterred by such a baseless fabric of a vision from reading the book before rejecting it, would seem to show that we have among us Captain Cook's Pelew Islanders in all their guileless innocence.

Still another proof of the Arcadian simplicity of some readers is afforded by the credit which appears to have been given to an article in the St. Paul *Pioneer-Press* of May 6th, afterward promoted to the dignity of a pamphlet, and widely circulated, especially at the West. It is entitled *The Little Cryptogram*, and is the work of Mr. J. Gilpin Pyle. Its strain is that of a rather venomous badinage, and its serious object to destroy the credibility of the cipher, by showing that under its rules you can get any narrative you choose. The way the author illustrates this is to compose an insulting sentence made up from the text of *Hamlet*, and lay alongside its several words the figures of a mock-cipher. Of course the process differs from Mr. Donnelly's in being perfectly arbitrary, and equally of course the performance is sheer travesty. Yet I was credibly informed by a gentleman who had traveled at the time through the Northwest that numbers of people considered this rank and shallow burlesque irresistible in point of humor, and an utter refutation of the methods of the cryptogram. Messrs. Colbert and Bidder, witnesses to the science of Mr. Donnelly's solutions, would hardly think Mr. Pyle's transparent

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buffoonery worth a smile, but they might easily be led to stare at the spectacle of sensible people giving it the slightest credence. A similar excursion was made in the New York *Sun* of May 6th. The author of the *Cryptogram* had deciphered of Ann Hathaway, "She hath a fine complexion, with a high color and long red hair," and the witty editor, parodying the cipher method, continued with, "She sometimes rode, perforce, a costermonger's white horse." But as this chimed in with the current fad that a white horse is always seen in the neighborhood of a red-headed girl, one could be merely amused, and say lightly, "The *Sun* is a jolly joker; it smiles for all." Whoever felt in the witticism an unfair mockery felt also that the injurious intention was quenched in the fun, and could declare like Jupiter in Hugo's poem, "I have laughed, therefore I pardon." The effect in Mr. Pyle's squib is different. He is not witty, and only produces a piece of sardonic slang, which aims to do harm, and rests upon naked misrepresentation. The sentence he pretends to extract from *Hamlet* by the cipher method is this: "Dou-nill-he, the author, politician and mountebanke, will work out the secret of this play. The sage is a daysie." One might as easily find in the *Midsummer's Night-Dream* by such a cipher-method: "If Jay-Gil-Pin-Pyle will onlie tie his ears over his heade in a neat bow-knot, and put on his hatte and keepe it on, no one will readily find out his resemblance to Nick Bottom. The hoodlum is a peach-blossom." But Mr. Pyle might think this style of cipher rather personal. It certainly is entirely apocryphal, which is another resemblance. Such

an attempt at invalidation is really beneath even contempt, but one can hardly help feeling something like indignation to think that means like these should be employed to break down an honest author.

## IV.

THE foregoing are samples of some outlying varieties of ill treatment to which *The Great Cryptogram*, has been subjected. But the full force of hostile criticism is not seen until we come to the pure literary censure, where the small deceit and sinful games of the professional reviewer have full play. A writer in the Boston *Daily Advertiser* having announced that Mr. Donnelly's book is dead, adds that it is because "the best judges" have condemned it. Let us see, therefore, by their judgments, what manner of men are "the best judges."

First in order of dignity is Mr. Appleton Morgan, the president of the New York Shakespeare Society. As Mr. Morgan for some time, long before he could really know anything about the cipher, for the book was not then published, had done his best in various ways to sap and break it down in advance, his public appearance against it in an elaborate article, nearly three columns long, close type, in the New York *World* of May 6th, was simply logical, though perhaps unexpected. He had been an avowed Baconian, a still more avowed anti-Shakespearean; and what had actuated his private enmity to the Donnelly book before he had read it, and his subsequent open attempt to set the myriad readers of *The World* against it, is best known to himself.

It is curious to follow his points. He begins with the dogmatic assertion, shotted to the muzzle with insult and dishonor, that Mr. Donnelly has fabricated a story which is merely a cento—a novellette compacted of Shakespeare words; and has foisted it off by a trick of figures as a cipher narrative of Lord Bacon's.

To show that no real cipher exists in the text, he asserts, with the air of one who was present when the first folio was printed, and knows all about it, that four printing houses in London were concerned in its manufacture, viz.: the establishments of W. Jaggard, Ed. Blount, I. Southweeke and W. Aspley, whose names were printed in the colophon as responsible for the press-work; and that consequently no four printing houses, nor one printing house, could have preserved the particular arrangement of the words on the page on which, as Mr. Donnelly has found, the order of the cipher depends. Does not Mr. Donnelly see this? he asks, tauntingly. If Mr. Donnelly sees what I see, he sees that the inflexible rule of the old printing offices was, "Follow copy, if you have to follow it out of the window!" and this disposes at once of Mr. Morgan's idle objection. Under the orders of the hired proof-reader, or the master of the establishment, paid to secure compliance, the printers would set up with Chinese fidelity exactly what was put before them, and preserve intact the arrangement of the words upon the page, whether they were in four printing houses or forty. That exactly this was done in the case of the great folio, we have positive evidence. The folio is generally well, and even carefully gotten up, but there

are certain places in it—exceptional pages, whole plays, and notably the entire section of the book called *Histories*—where the typographical eccentricities and violations are such that they never could have been made except by printers working mechanically in blind obedience to orders. We find false paging, words improperly hyphenated, words improperly bracketed, a preconcerted number of words forced and strained by uncouth devices into the page or column, with the manifest intention of having just so many there, neither less nor more—things which no master-printer or proof-reader would overlook or tolerate in a book unless by design, and which Mr. Donnelly has found are the conditions of the cipher. That these peculiarities were intentional is proved by the following fact: In 1632, nine years after the publication of the first folio, Bacon and Shakespeare being both dead, another edition of the folio was issued. Stereotype did not then exist, and the book was certainly reset. Here, then, was an opportunity to correct the typographical errors, ostensibly monstrous, and impossible to any directing printer, which deformed the volume. What do we find? A few petty errors, mostly typographical, are corrected, showing that the book was reset under supervision, not mechanically; but the most notable are spared, and the section of the folio called *Histories*—that is, the historical plays—where the seeming mistakes and perversions make a thick-crowded jungle of incongruity and absurdity, is absolutely duplicated! The inference is inevitable that some one survived to compel the types to maintain the apparently false order of nine years before, and preserve intact the wrong

pagination, the ridiculous hyphenation and bracketing, the grotesque word-crowding, and all the other eccentricities which mark the original folio. Mr. Morgan says that this typographical anarchy could not have been deliberately carried out in the first folio. That it was carried out in the first folio is decisively proved by the fact that it was carried out again, without the least variation (exceptions noted), in the second folio. It was done in both cases simply by the printers following copy, as they were bound to do, and as it was an iron rule to do. Mr. Morgan can never make any person of sense or fairness, who knows these facts, believe that it was done without design or by accident, and his attempt to show that Mr. Donnelly has thus no basis in reason for his cipher, is obviously a piece of pitiable weakness and futility.

His remarks immediately following are not worth comment. They seem singularly mud-witted and wandering, and are simply in continuation of his assertion, already disproved, that Mr. Donnelly has failed to see that the typographical eccentricities of the folio are due to mere "shiftlessness" on the part of the printers, and therefore afford no basis for cipher computations. To establish this, he descants with ludicrous incoherence on the odd fact that only one or two pages of the folio version of *Troilus and Cressida* are paged, while the rest are left unnumbered. This he explains on the theory that the printer did not know where to put the play. I do not see, nor can anybody see, why this should have made him fail to complete paging it, nor do I see how the fact can in any way affect

injuriously those conclusions of Mr. Donnelly to which great experts in cryptology have done reverence.

Some floundering, however, may be expected from Mr. Morgan on these unfamiliar grounds, and his foot is only on his native heath when he comes upon philology, essaying to show that the cipher language is that of the nineteenth, and not of the seventeenth century; and hence that Mr. Donnelly is a clumsy forger. To expose the awkward villain by pure philological tests is now his purpose, and he begins by citing a sentence from the cipher narrative. The italics are mine:

"He [Shakspere] is the son of a poor peasant, who *yet* follows the trade of glove-making in the *hole* where he was born and bred—one of the peasant towns of the West. And there are *even rumors* that Will and his brother did themselves follow the trade for some time before they came here."

To this sentence Mr. Morgan at once applies the fatal philological pick. "Yet" in the sense of "still," he says, is considerably later than Bacon's date. The assertion of so eminent an authority must have been very damaging to Mr. Donnelly in the minds of the multitudinous readers of *The World*, who doubtless at once thought the cipher fairly convicted and exposed. As Mr. Morgan, however, unaccountably mentioned Dr. Abbott's *Shakespearean Grammar* in this connection, I at once turned to the book, and found in the very first instance of the Elizabethan use of the word, his assertion flatly contradicted. "*Yet* in the sense of *still*," explains Dr. Abbott; and showing that it is not, as Mr.

Morgan says, "considerably later than Bacon's date," he quotes:

> "You, Diana,
> Under my poor instructions *yet* must suffer,
> Something in my behalf."
> *Alls Well That Ends Well, Act IV, Sc. 4.*

One might expect a better knowledge of the text of Shakespeare in the president of the New York Shakespeare Society. But Mr. Morgan has been a Baconian, as he avows, and we poor Baconians are so ignorant!

Here is another instance, not in Dr. Abbott (but the instances are plentiful), of "yet" being used in the sense of "still." It is Portia chiding Brutus:

> "I urged you further; then you scratched your head
> And too impatiently stamped with your foot:
> *Yet* I insisted, *yet* you answered not."
> *Julius Cæsar, Act II, Sc. 1.*

And here, again, is Brutus in the battle:

> "*Yet*, countrymen, O *yet* hold up your heads!"
> *Julius Cæsar, Act V, Sc. 4.*

It is noticeable that Mr. Morgan gets away, with perhaps instinctive brevity, from this perilous point of cavil, and comes swiftly to his second instance—"hole." "The allusion to a country town as a hole is," he says, "a very modern usage." I am not at all sure that the word "hole" in the cipher does not refer to the river valley of Statford on-Avon, the term then being archaic Saxon or Anglo-Saxon for dale or valley. I do not assert this, however, but assume that a town is meant in the cipher. In this sense it is commonly used contumeliously, in the vernacular of this country and also of Great Britain, though probably rarely in literature. I heard of a

lively lady saying with much bounce, years ago, "Before I'd live in such a miserable hole as Chelsea, I'd die!" Lately a letter came to me from England which mentions a village as "a pretty place enough, but a wretched hole." So in *Robert Elsmere* (Chap. XV), where a dilapidated hamlet is described as "a God-forsaken hole." The truth is that this common unliterary idiom is traditional, dating from time immemorial, and so prevalent was the term once that it was even frequently added to the proper names of towns in their derogation, as in the case of Stangate Hole, the village in the inland county of Huntingdonshire, where the frightful murderer Masham was hanged in the old time; or Limehouse Hole, somewhere not far from London; and in a quantity of such instances. The use of the word as in Holmes' Hole, Wood's Hole, (now altered to Holl, quite needlessly,) or the Hole-in-the-Wall, is different, indicating here a sort of running-in place for vessels, a definition which the lexicographers are much at fault to make no note of. But apart from these designations are those thrown more formerly than at present on mean or disliked places; and Mr. Appleton Morgan knows very little of "English as she is spoke" in England, when he ventures to consider "hole" in this sense merely modern. Roget in his profoundly learned *Thesaurus*, gives it repeatedly as indicative of a place, a precinct, an abode, an address, a seat, a habitation, as it always has been. Of course, everyone knows its antiquity as referring to a single dwelling. "This worm-eaten hole," says Shakespeare, fleering at Warkworth castle. Here we have it as denoting in the words of Dryden, "a

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mean habitation." Now, if a whole town or city was called in the sixteenth century "a mean habitation," as when King James' Bible terms Babylon "a habitation of dragons," I do not see why Mr. Morgan should bring into question the antiquity of the cipher-English which calls such a habitation a hole.

He continues his proof that Mr. Donnelly is a fraudulent manufacturer of words in their modern sense for his cipher, by averring that "even," as the above cited paragraph gives it, would not be used in Bacon's day. Still further, that it is doubtful whether it can be found much earlier than Pope, who says, "Here all their rage and *even* their murmurs cease", this being exactly the sense in which the cipher employs it. He says that Mr. Donnelly uses it to mean "likewise," etc., which is obviously untrue. It is used to carry the meaning of "as you would not have thought," or "as you might not expect," the same as it does now.

Let us see how "even" was used in Bacon's day.

> "*Even* that your pity is enough to cure me."
>
> *Shakespeare Sonnets, CXI.*

Meaning "even your pity," says Dr. Abbott. Will anyone deny that this is the grammatical equivalent of "even their murmurs?" Then the word does occur earlier than Pope, does it not, Mr. Morgan?

Here are other instances:

> "Or use all arts, or haunt all companies,
> That may corrupt her, *even* in his eyes."
>
> *Ben Jonson: Underwoods.*
>
> "Mine eyes *even* seeing it."
>
> *I Kings, I: 48,*
>
> "That thy trust may be in the Lord, I have made known to thee this day, *even* to thee.
>
> *Proverbs, XXII: 19.*

Be it remembered that the translation in which these texts occur is contemporary with Lord Bacon.

Here are some sentences from Sir Thomas Browne, a writer, whose youth is contemporary with Bacon's age, and whose diction is so much like one of the Verulamian styles that Spedding rejects on internal evidence, after due cogitation, some of Bacon's posthumous essays, conjecturally ascribing them to the author of the *Religio Medici*, rashly, I think, for how should any of Sir Thomas Browne's manuscripts have gotten among Lord Bacon's private papers? He says:

"For when *even* crows were funerally burnt."

*Urn Burial, Chapter I.*

"*Even* such as hope to rise again would not be content," etc.

*Urn Burial, Chapter I.*

"But *even* in times of subjection," etc.

*Urn Burial, Chapter I.*

"And *even* in Jutland and Cymbrica, in Anglia Sleswick, urns with bones were found," etc.

*Urn Burial, Chapter II.*

Sir Thomas Browne's writings are full of this idiom.

To multiply these instances would be easy, but those given show plainly that the sense in which "even" is used in the cipher narrative, is no more modern than the times of Elizabeth and James.

It is the same with the word "rumors." Mr. Morgan says that the word in the sense given in the cited paragraph, would not be used in Bacon's day, when it was always in the possessive, always personified, and never pluralized. Let us see if this accomplished philologist speaks truly:

"But I can tell you one thing, my lord, which I hear from *common rumors*." *Timon, Act III, Sc. 2.*

Here is a clear case, found in Shakespeare, though not known to the president of the New York Shakespeare Society, where the word is not in the possessive, not personified, and is distinctly pluralized! And here are other samples, still from Shakespeare:

"When I came hither to transport the tidings
Which I have heavily borne, there *ran a rumor*,
Of many worthy fellows that were out."

*Macbeth, Act IV., Sc. 3.*

"I find the people strangely fantasied,
Possessed with *rumors*."

*King John, Act IV. Sc. 2.*

For a test to prove the language of the cipher bogus, great is Mr. Appleton Morgan's philology!

He proceeds to fresh triumphs in this direction by citing the following sentence, given, he says, "by Mr. Donnelly as written by Francis Lord Bacon."

"I was in the greatest fear that they would say that the image shown upon the title-leaf of his volume was but a mask to hide my own face."

Comment upon his perfectly ridiculous and utterly groundless philological objection to these words is rendered unnecessary by the fact that no such sentence is in the cipher, nor attributed to Lord Bacon anywhere in the book. False citations like this are what Montaigne calls "pinching the pig to make him speak." However, "anything to beat Grant," is an axiom still in order. Mr. Donnelly must be vanquished, and when facts are wanting, let us have inventions. The sentence, it is true, occurs in the book, though not in the cipher, but it is purely suppositive on the part of Mr. Donnelly, and not ascribed to Lord Bacon at all—an illustration

of the sentence a reader might form, suspecting a cipher, when he saw a number of significant words near each other on a printed page; and as Mr. Morgan, no matter what may be his defects in philological knowledge, knows how to read, no one was better aware of the fact than he.

He continues the effort to convict Mr. Donnelly of forgeries by ferreting out a string of alleged anachronisms, at the character of which the reader cannot but marvel. They are the merest commonplaces, such as might have been uttered equally in the seventeenth or nineteenth century, having no ear-mark of style or manner to denote the date of their origin. "The plays are much admired and draw great numbers." "The subjects are far beyond his ability." "Although I am acquainted with him, I would not have known him, the transformation was so great." "His looks prove it." Well! As Dr. McGlynn said of the doctrine of papal infallibility, "Good Lord!" Does Mr. Morgan really expect any one to identify phrases as ordinary as these? I could bring him fifty such, culled from the greatest Elizabethan writers, and defy him to name their century. The fact is that these citations look very like a trick on the part of Mr. Morgan, the suggestion as anachronisms of phrases so featureless that no one can give them the physiognomy of one time or another, at the same time leaving his own defamatory intimation as a quasi-proof of the literary villany of Mr. Donnelly.

He goes on in this direction by affecting to quote from the cipher more phrases, which he avers belong to the language of another age. One of

these is "appearance of danger," and comes from a passage in the book, decidedly off-cipher, given to show, roughly, how under the control of different root-numbers, the same words contribute to three different narratives. As Mr. Donnelly makes no pretense to verbal accuracy in this passage, but expressly the contrary, it would seem somewhat high-handed to select a phrase from it as proof of philological anachronism. But this Mr. Morgan does, citing "appearance of danger" as unknown to Bacon's time, and therefore a forgery by Mr. Donnelly. Yet here is the same idiom in Shakespeare:

> "*Appearance* of fancy."
> *Much Ado, Act III, Sc. 2.*

And here it is in King James' Bible:

> "*Appearance* of fire."
> *Numbers: IX, 15.*

Besides, if the word "appearance" in the cipher phrase is to be understood, which is very possible, in the sense of "probability" or "likelihood," it is still a well-known idiom of Shakespeare's time, for in that sense Bacon uses it when he says, "There is that which hath no *appearance*." Either way, Mr. Morgan's assertion has no validity.

"Had fled" is another phrase he brings up for the conviction of Mr. Donnelly. Here we are reminded again of Montaigne's saying, for the words are not in the cipher, and once more the pig has been pinched to make him speak. Another pinch, and we have "a body of twenty", which is also not in the cipher. Pinch the pig again, and he gives us "to look for" in the sense of to seek

for, another quotation from an imaginary cipher text. Mr. Morgan thinks it fair to present these fictitious phrases as proofs of the ignorance and wickedness of the man whose work he is pretending to estimate! I offer the spectacle as a picture of the ideal reviewer.

He proceeds with the declaration that the phrase in which the cipher mentions the failing Shakespeare, "He can not last long," is in "an idiom which certainly can not be fifty years old in the English language." On the contrary, the very idiom occurs repeatedly in the plays and in the other literature of the time:

"The wonder is he hath *endured so long.*"

*Lear, Act V, Sc. 3.*

"A [dead] man . . . he will *last you* some eight year."

*Hamlet, Act V, Sc. 1.*

"And *last so, long* enough."

*Timon, Act V, Sc. 2.*

"Well, I can not *last ever.*"

*II Henry, IV, Act I, Sc. 2.*

"To be free minded and cheerfully disposed at hours of meat, and of sleep, and of exercise, is one of the best precepts of *long lasting.*"—*Bacon's Essays on Regimen of Health.*

Next we are instructed that the phrase "to flatter himself" was certainly not to be found in that age, the allusion being to the cipher sentence "He is flattering himself with the hope and expectation that he will get well." But in Shakespeare we have;

"*Flattering himself* with project of a power."

*II Henry IV, Act I, Sc. 3.*

And in King James' Bible we have:

"He *flattereth himself* in his own eyes."

*Psalms XXXVI: 2.*

The idiom in the three cases is precisely the same.

Mr. Morgan's finest feat in the philological line is perhaps his attempt to trip Mr. Donnelly on the phrase of the Bishop of Worcester in the cipher concerning Shakspere's age—"Although he is not yet thirty-three." Here he lets one see he has him foul! Nobody in that age, he declares, would say "thirty-three," and the sentence is a manifest forgery. "Ask an Englishman to-day," says this unerring detective, "how old a man is of the age indicated in the last sentence, and he will tell you—not thirty-three, but three and thirty; *and I can not trace a time in the history of English when a contrary rule obtained.*" Can not, indeed! What does Mr. Morgan say to this:

> "Hast thou any grene cloth, said our kynge,
> That thou wilt sell nowe to me?
> Ye, for God, sayd Robyn,
> *Thirty yerdes and three.*"
>
> *A Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode: Ritson.*

It appears that Englishmen did not always say "three and thirty," but quite as often "thirty and three." Here is more evidence of similar liberty, dating from the fourteenth century.

> "In Jerusalem he reigned *thirty-three years* and a half."
>
> *Sir John Mandeville, Chap. VI.*
>
> "He was *thirty-three years* and three months old."
>
> *Sir John Mandeville, Chap. VII.*
>
> "Our Lady ——— was conversant with her son *thirty-three years* and three months."
>
> *Sir John Mandeville, Chap. X.*

Yet Mr. Morgan "can not trace a time in the history of English" when people did not say "three and thirty" instead of "thirty-three!"

If he were as conversant with the plays as one would naturally expect the Grand Copht of a Shakespeare society to be, he would know that the great dramatist himself did not always, or even usually, put the cart before the horse in these constructions.

For example:

"Whom thou obeyedst *thirty and six years*"
3 *Henry VI., Act III, Sc.* 3.

"Toad that under the cold stone
Days and night hast *thirty-one.*"
*Macbeth, Act IV Sc.* 1.

"I have years on my back *forty-eight.*"
*Lear, Act I, Sc.* 4.

"He had before this last expedition, *twenty-five* wounds upon him ——— Now it" *twenty-seven.*"
*Coriolanus, Act II, Sc.* 1.

"I have known thee these *twenty-nine years.*"
2 *Henry IV, Act II, Sc.* 4.

"*Twenty-five years* have I but gone in travail."
*Comedy of Errors, Act V, Sc.* 3.

"Were I but *twenty-one,*
Your father's image is so hit in you—
His very air—that I should call you brother."
*Winter's Tale, Act V, Sc.* 2.

"Methought I did recoil
*Twenty-three years.*"
*Winter's Tale, Act I, Sc.* 2.

Of course, Shakespeare, whoever he was, might have said, and would have properly said, if he had chosen, six and thirty, one and thirty, eight and forty, five and twenty, etc., instead of the locutions cited, but it was optional with him, as it was with Englishmen before and after him, and the way he used his option forms a fatal bar of precedent to the accusation Mr. Morgan brings against the Donnelly cipher in this particular.

His final effort to invalidate the cipher text, and fix a mean crime on Mr. Donnelly, is probably the smallest thing he has done in the philological line, and certainly not the least disastrous to himself as a critic. Professing to quote from the cipher, he finds "bitter beer" as one item of the supper at Stratford, and asks skeptically, "was there such a thing as 'bitter beer'?" As there was beer called "sweet," of course, the other beer was discriminated as "bitter." The discrimination continues to this day, and in England, I am told, you constantly hear of "bitter beer." In one of our popular song-books, years ago, there was a catch with the doggerel lines:

"We'll drink Bass and Allsop's
Glorious bitter beer."

All this, however, is of no consequence beyond showing how little equipment Mr. Morgan has for his self-chosen task of defamatory criticism, the true point being that this is the closing instance of pinching the pig to make him speak, and a rousing squawk we get from him. The quotation is a sheer manufacture. There is nothing about bitter beer in the cipher. The phrase used is "bottle-ale."

Later it came out that while Mr. Morgan professed in his *World* article to cite from the cipher, he was really citing from a letter Mr. Donnelly had written him long before, in which, I presume, no effort had been made to give the exact cryptic language. The reader will admire the ingenuousness of this proceeding, especially when nice points of philology were involved, depending upon precise terms. A month after the book was published, he appeared in the June *Shakespereana*, correcting his

false citation to read "bottle-ale," and carelessly observing, as though it were of no consequence, that he had not obtained it from the book he had been reviewing. He then charged that Mr. Donnelly had made an alteration in the cipher since he wrote the letter, offering not the slightest evidence in support of this assertion; and further that he had "laid one question but opened up another, namely: Was there any ale in bottles in those days?" Ale was home-brewed everywhere, he says, not stowed away, nor exported. "Why should it have been brought upon Shakespeare's table in bottles?" Still harping on the cipher, you see! He will not allow the public to believe that Mr. Donnelly, is, even on one point, anything but a forger of documents.

Nevertheless, there *was* "bottle-ale" in those days, as people know who are not so silly and ill-read as to raise a question about it. Here is one reference to it among many:

"Everyone that can frame a booke in rime, though it be but in commendation of copper noses or *bottle ale*, will catch at the garlande due to poets."

*Welbes Discourse of English Poetrie*, 1586.

Here again the President of the New York Shakespeare society's lack of familiarity with the pages of the Shakespeare drama, kept from his knowledge further instances, which would have prevented him from publicly doubting the existence of Elizabethan ale in bottles. As thus:

"The Myrmidons are no *bottle-ale* houses."

*Twelfth Night, Act II, Sc.* 3.

And again:

"What a beard of the general's cut, and a horrid suit of the camp, will do among *foaming bottles and ale-washed wits* is wonderful to be thought of."

*Henry V, Act III, Sc.* 3.

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And finally, (it is hoped that no indignant Baconian will utter the line with significance,)

"Away you *bottle-ale* rascal!"

2 *Henry IV*, Act [illegible]

The rain of philological learning with which Mr. Morgan has been fertilizing the public mind, dribbles away here into a few scattering drops. One is that the cipher sentence, "His purse is well lined with the gold he receives from the plays," "does not sound like Baconian or Jacobean English." "Does not *sound*," indeed. A rare touchstone for a student of language. To line a coffer, a pocket, a purse with gold, occurs constantly in seventeenth-century English. "What if I do line one of their hands?" says Shakespeare. "I to line my Christmas coffers," says Massinger. "When thou feelest thy purse well lined," says Ratsei. But one need not linger on such trivia, which simply show Mr. Morgan's remarkable ignorance of his subject. The only point worth notice in this part of his article is his muddy-headed effort to catch Mr. Donnelly in an anachronism showing fraud. It appears by the cipher that the Bishop of Worcester wrote a letter to Cecil, about Shakespeare, in which he reports, "It is thought he will buy all the land appurtenant to New Place." Now this, says Mr. Morgan, could not possibly have been inserted in cipher in the Henry IV quartos of 1598–1600, nor in the folio of 1623, because Shakespeare had already bought the land at New Place a year or two prior to the date of the first quarto. Hence, Mr. Donnelly has forged the sentence and is to be held up to public derision. But what was *the date of the Bishop's letter to Cecil?* Oh, no matter!

Admirable reasoner. Boiled down to a single allspice, Mr. Morgan's point is just this, Bacon could not have put the sentence into a cipher in the quartos of 1598–1600, or the folio of 1623, because the Bishop of Worcester wrote his letter to Cecil prior to Shakespeare's making the purchase in 1597. Peerless logician!

V.

An additional proof that there is really no cipher in the text, and that the one presented is entirely spurious and made by Mr. Donnelly, is the fact, says Mr. Morgan, that it does not resemble any of Lord Bacon's acknowledged works; and he asks with crushing force, "Does the cipher narrative remind us of the *Essays*, or of the *Novum Organum*, or of the *De Augmentis?*" Why let us see:

"Atque quemadmodum sectæ conditores non sumus, ita nec operum particularium largitories aut promissores."

—*Novum Organum, CXVII.*

Certainly the difference between the style of the cipher and the *Novum Organum* is obvious, and the parallel is discouraging; but let us look further:

"Urbes munitæ plena armamentaria equorum propagines generosæ, currus armati, elephanti, machinæ atque tormenta bellica omnigena, et similia," etc.—*De Augmentis.*

It appears we fare no better with the *De Augmentis*, and must in all frankness admit that the simple English of the cipher story does not "remind us" of Bacon's rolling and resounding Latin. As for the *Essays*, their matter is quite matched by their art; they are studiously apothegmic, almost gnomic, in their construction; and the reader must concede to Mr. Morgan that the cipher is not cast in their

mold. But who but a genius like him would require that it should be, or demand that an English style should tally with a Latin? Had he sought to bring into the comparison Lord Bacon's *Apothegms*, or some of his somewhat stiff and ineloquent private letters, or even certain paragraphs of his *History of Henry VII.*, there might be some sense in it, but he advances the plain tale of the cryptograph, sets it against the powerful rhetoric, cast for eternity, of three of Bacon's greatest works, and asks, with bland simplicity, whether the one "reminds" us of the others. This is truly pastoral, and what Mr. Morgan wants is a broad hat of plaited straw, blue ribbons, a crook, and some sheep. One would think that the fact would have occurred to him that the cipher story must necessarily have been seriously cramped by having to move in the shackles of the outer text, and that this condition alone would have prevented any great effects of style, or resemblance to any rhetorical masterpiece. The greatest artist in language, set to move in the interior of a grand play with a cipher narrative, would find that he had to perform a fetter-dance of singular difficulty. But Mr. Morgan sees nothing of all this, and rolls off with complacency his shallow guff about the want of "parallel" between a necessarily restricted and labored secret text, and the mighty, untrammeled diction of the *Novum Organum*.

Whether the manner of the cipher does not coincide with Lord Bacon's more than the critic imagines, is a question which need not be entered upon. The immediate concern is with Mr. Morgan's critical exploits, the next of which is quite worthy of

all that precede it. Keeping in view the destruction of Mr. Donnelly's book, he goes on to declare that the great folio of 1623 is not authentic! Here is a book put forward as a *magnum opus*—the first collected edition of plays then famous with the public; a book which at once mounted to supremacy, and so kept it that a perfect copy of it to-day is worth $5,000; a book on which we rely for our fullest knowledge of its author's works, containing, as Mr. Morgan himself says, several of the plays never heard of until its publication; and Mr. Morgan declares it is not authentic, and gives this as a reason why Lord Bacon would never have chosen it as a place of concealment for his cipher narrative! What place should he have chosen? The "stolen and surreptitious copies?" The scattered quartos? The absurdity of this position has never been excelled. It is obvious that whether the first folio were "authentic" or not, it would have been a sufficient depository for Lord Bacon's secret history, if only because it was unique, famous, and assured of popular permanence, as it has proved to be. Another palpable absurdity Mr. Morgan commits, in his zeal to impugn Mr. Donnelly's veracity, is to assert that, if Bacon chose the folio for his cover, he would have been careful to have the text exact — free from interpolations, which, he says, it is not. What has the purity of the text to do with its capacity for enfolding a secret reading? Manifestly nothing. In fact, it appears that in certain cases the corruption of the text is caused by the exigencies of the cipher. Moreover, it is clear enough that some of these impurities which Mr. Morgan considers "actors'

interpolations," are so only in his own fancy. For example, the folio gives in *Lear*, the following lines:

> "Pray do not mocke me,
> I am a very foolish, fond old man,
> Four score and upwards,
> *Not an hour more or less;*
> And to deal plainly,
> I fear I am not in my perfect mind."

The line in italics Mr. Morgan thinks an actor's interpolation, adding that the author would never have put it there, because it is incoherent and makes the other lines ridiculous by impairing their pathos. But it is at once a question, with the reader, whether this incoherence is not in perfect keeping with Lear's weak and wandering mental condition; and this is comfirmed by his immediate misgiving in the next lines, where he seems to feel that what he has just said is nonsense, and fears that he is not in his perfect mind. A stroke of genius like this flickering lapse from noble pathos to pitiable incongruity, is not usually characteristic of actors' interpolations.

Nor is it at all clear that the speech of Falstaff in the *Merry Wives*, where he prays "God bless me from that Welsh fairy!" is a bit of actor's burlesque. Mr. Morgan's misreading here is really amazing. Falstaff, crouched in the fern around Herne's oak, sees the company enter, with their pretty twinkling tapers, disguised as fairies. Evans, the Welshman, one of them, speaks his lines, and Falstaff, not recognizing him, but hearing his Welsh accent, naturally in his scared and bewildered condition, thinks him a Welsh fairy, and delivers himself accordingly. Could anything be plainer? Yet Mr. Morgan must find this, like the other, an instance of "changes

made by players," spurred against reason, by his desire to make out that Mr. Donnelly is a cheat and a liar!

The same motive drives him into the attempt to establish that the plays must have been written by an actor, (Shakespeare); and that therefore Mr. Donnelly is without his prime basis, because the histrionic profession arrays itself solidly, by instinct, against the Baconian theory. Actors themselves, he declares, are never Baconians. Mr. Morgan is mistaken. Charlotte Cushman was a Baconian; and doubtless, if the matter were looked into, there would be found others. But Miss Cushman was not only a great actor—in certain roles of comedy, as in *As You Like It*, or the *Jealous Wife*, never excelled by anyone—but she was also a woman of wide culture, and of a strong and scholarly intellect. This enabled her to study the plays by lights which the very profession of most actors excludes, and to which as a class, their whole training and experience are foreign. What is there in the discipline of actors, as such, to make them critical umpires of a vast and difficult literary question, like that of the origin, purpose and relation of the Shakespeare plays? Who made them judges? Their business is strictly and purely personation; to act, and to study to act, by mastering the means which magnetic elocution, delivery and presence offer for the moving of the mind and soul. It is a great function; how great they know best in our generation who have been transported by Henry Placide or William Warren in comedy, or electrified by the elder Booth or Rachel in tragedy. But it is not allied to the

function of criticism. When I think of some actors I have seen or known—sterling old John Gilbert, a great star who has never starred, sound as oak in sense and judgment; Forrest, matchless in his subtle comprehension of the meaning of his text; that majestic elder Booth, just named, whose intuitions were as broad and bright as tropic lightning; that incomparable Rachel, also named, less a woman than a sibyl in her intelligence; Coquelin, whose writing alone, notably his recent fine appreciation of the lyric beauty and grandeur of Victor Hugo's genius, shows an intellect of no common scope and delicacy; the incomparable William Warren, Hackett, the two Placides, Burton, Henry Irving—when I think of them, or their few equals, I could almost regard them competent to express as wise a judgment, by native insight, on the true authorship of the Shakespeare plays as did their peer, Charlotte Cushman. Still the trust would be hazardous, for they would be off their beat, and as actually as though the problem were one of astronomy. If one would be warned of what might be expected in such a field from the ordinary run of actors, let him consult the article by Lawrence Barrett, *Concerning Shakespeare*, in the *North American Review*, of last December. Mr. Barrett is an actor of talent, representing a high average of his profession, and stands eminent in popular esteem. But no one fairly conversant with the literature of the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy, or with literature at all, can read his contribution without amused disdain. To his apprehension, the whole enquiry is nothing but an emanation of the literary skepticism and "blind irreverence" of

which, he says, Huxley, Darwin and Tyndall have proved the forerunners! This stroke of judgment would make a cat laugh, since it is notoriously known that our fruitful modern criticism began, (at least since it ceased to be subterranean), with Voltaire and the Encyclopedists; and continued with the mighty breed of Germans, like Niebuhr, who revised the old statements and made them conform to sense and fact, long before Huxley, Darwin and Tyndall were born. As for the startling anomaly, the downright contradiction, between Shakespeare's personal record and his reputed works, which staggered Guizot, Hallam, Schlegel, Coleridge, Emerson and a host of perfectly orthodox scholars, he appears to be entirely oblivious of it; a slight lack, one would think, to any proper consideration of the question. All through the article, even from the start, Bacon is for him the impossible monster Pope invented and the world never saw:—"the wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind;"—and to think of him as the author of the plays, is, to his mind, simply reason gone to seed in folly.

A notable feature is the biographical sketch he gives of Shakespeare, bald as the head of Martin Van Buren, and leaving out all the incidents that would make it graphic, possibly because they would also make it discreditable. The story of the outrageous and wanton trespass, which no owner of a country estate would endure, any more than did Sir Thomas Lucy; the traditions and proofs of his coarse amours, his drunkenness, his greed, his usury; his *parvenu* ambitions; his attempt to wring from the hard hands of peasants their poor landed rights; his impudent and dishonest efforts to obtain armorial bearings,

are all omitted. The only salient point is that Mrs. Shakespeare, who survived her lord, put up the monument to his memory in Stratford church. (For a bold bouncer, this takes the cake and bears the bell.) To the present day, it is an utter mystery who erected the monument, with the bust on top, which the great sculptor, Chantrey, thought, by certain tokens, was carven from a death-mask; with the two little cherubs, one blowing a trump of fame, or holding an inverted torch (I forget which), the other pointing downward with a spade; and with the tributary inscriptions, one of them in Latin, in which the poet is compared to Nestor, Socrates and Virgil. But this oracular actor states that it was Mrs. Shakespeare that did it—states it, too, with careless assurance as something always known. "The facts am false", averred the colored orator; and there are a great number of positions, assumptions and assertions in Mr. Barrett's article, to which the expression is applicable. He seems quite imbued, rightly enough, with the idea of Shakespeare's personal illiteracy or scant education; but, therefore, in deference to his fetish, he thinks it necessary to assume the most supercillious attitude toward learning as a correlative of genius. Scholarship, he thinks, has never been the concomitant of creative literature, though he could be safely defied to show a single poet or author, of the first magnitude, antique or modern, who was not a scholar also. It is in this connection that he actually has the fatuity to advance the notion that the mighty Eschylus, and his almost compeers, Sophocles and Euripides, were less in attainment than Plato. He tacitly, and even

more than tacitly, assumes the unlettered condition of Shakespeare, scornfully saying in this general relation, "Colleges do not create poets;", and then glorifies Moliere, who, he seems to imply, was one of the same kind; leaving his readers with the impression that, like Shakespeare, he was all genius and no learning. He forgets that Moliere was thoroughly educated at Clermont, then one of the finest colleges in Europe; was also the special pupil of the great philosopher Gassendi; and was afterward for some years a student of law. He ought to know that there is no parallel in educational proficiency between this actor and the one of the Globe Theatre, at whom "Ryc. Quyney," in his life-time, spat the jeering epithets, "*Histrio! mima!*" But the crowning enormity of this grotesque article, by a flower of the profession, is the unseemly manner in which its author permits himself to speak of Lord Bacon. He ignores, if he ever knew with what adoring ardor, what glowing veneration, Bacon was regarded by that very Gassendi, the illustrious master of his revered Moliere, whose old French eyes would have blazed with noble anger, could he have heard one he knew to be good and great so foully vilified. The histrionic reviewer needs to be told that his censure is as unfitting as unmannerly, for, even should the varied infamy charged on Bacon be proved, as it never has been, he would still remain a majestic man; still remain, even then, in the words of Browning, our "spirit's arbiter, magnificent in sin;" and, whatever the disclosures, never would deserve, as Mr. Barrett says, "immortal contempt as his portion." The tone adopted toward Bacon is as

sophomorical as it is ferocious and diracefsgul, and shows how ignorant the critic is of his subject, and of the results of recent investigation. When he mentions "that withering denunciation of Lord Macaulay, which will cling to Bacon when the Shakespeare myth is forgotten," he makes it evident that he has not got far enough in his knowledge to know that the denunciations of the unscrupulous Scotch sophist are not much for clinging, especially among well-read Americans. He has apparently never heard of Hepworth Dixon, who, on this subject, laid out both Lord Campbell and Macaulay uncommonly cold. He seems to have never read the *Evenings with a Reviewer*, that work in which the illustrious Spedding, a pedestrian mind, not talaria-ankled, not "clinquant, all in gold," like Macaulay, but slow, sure, terrible in the possession of his patient research, and in his unflawed veracity and perfect candor, plods on, like Zisca in the battle with his scythe, mowing down the host of verbal tricks and lies arrayed against Bacon, and destroying forever the historic credit of the shameless defamer of William Penn, who also blackened the fame of the greatest of Englishmen. If Mr. Barrett had read these books he would then have been only in the beginning of knowledge, but he would have learned enough to know that Bacon was never false to Essex — that violent and turbulent young man, long estranged from his great guide, who sank from his noble early promise into the life of a dissolute libertine, broke out at last into a selfish and bloody treason, and meanly sacrificed, when doomed, the wretched comrades whom he had led into his bad

enterprise. He would have learned further that Bacon never corrupted justice as Chancellor, every one of his decisions being unrevoked by the very Parliament that ruined him, and standing intact to this day; that he never, not in a single instance, took bribes, but only the fees and free gifts appertaining to his office, which he was expected to take; which stood as make-weight to its petty salary; and which Sir Thomas More and every Chancellor took, unimpeached, before him; that he never, as Mr. Barrett declares,—parroting the brilliant knave, Macaulay,—"favored torture," but in the very case of Peacham referred to, opposed it, being simply present, under protest, as a subordinate member of the council that examined the poor miscreant; and that he never, either by character or action, merited the vile insolence thrown upon him by this theatrical popinjay when he calls him the "meanest of mankind." Mr. Barrett's essay, in fine, does not sustain Mr. Morgan's notion that actors, as such, are competent to utter judgment on the authorship of the plays. Its miserable farrago of toadying platitudes, sophomoric invective, misstatement, suppression in consequence and ignorance, and can never win a deeper tribute than a sardonic smile from the ordinary well-read reader;—a reader who will close his perusal with a curling lip, and perchance remember the superb and savage gibe Junius flung at the actor Garrick, "Keep to your pantomimes, you vagabond!"

VI.

Mr. Morgan labors to prove that the dramas could not have been written by Bacon, because of their manifest adaptability in action to the stage;

because, in his own words, "they are too evidently the work of a practical inventor of plays." I remember reading an article ten years ago by Julius Benedix, a distinguished German authority, the author of over thirty dramas, so successful that several of them have been translated into other languages, and himself the practical manager of several leading German theaters; and he demonstrated beyond cavil that from the point of view of the playwright, the dramas of Shakespeare violate the requirements of the stage in every particular. The proof of their relative unfitness for representation, and of their not, therefore, having originated in the brain of a dramatic manager, is found in the fact that some of them are never acted, and all the others, without exception, exist only for the theatre in a stage edition, abridged, altered and excised, often in the most radical manner. So much for Mr. Morgan's idea that their structure shows that they must have been written by an actor. Besides, the argument proves too much:—nothing less than that all successful dramas must have had actors for their authors, which is notoriously untrue. Is there anything finer than the elder Dumas' *Lady of Belle Isle*? Are not Victor Hugo's plays, *Hernani*, *Ruy Blas* and the others, almost incomparable for stage effect, as for ideal picturesqueness and beauty? What play better keeps the stage for its acting merits, than Bulwer's *Richelieu*? So with a hundred instances. But the authors were not actors. The idea is simple folly.

Such is the kind of article relied on to damage or destroy Mr. Donnelly's book, and sent out to many

thousands of readers. Such is one of "the best judges." Do we complain without reason of such reviewing or reviewers?

Mr. Morgan ends by asserting that Mr. Donnelly has killed the Baconian theory and buried it "deeper than ever plummet sounded." Has he, indeed? That is just exactly what we are going to see! Meanwhile Mr. Morgan personally abjures the Baconians, of whose Spartan band he was, he says, a member. Stand fast, brood of Leonidas! You can spare him! Ten years ago he published a book, *The Shakespeare Myth*. I will not claim that it was faultless, but it was a strong, and in the main admirable, brief in the case against Shakespeare; and it stands to-day unanswered and unanswerable. Before he takes his leave of the Baconians, I recommend him to confute his own volume. To do that would justify his apostacy, but I tell him plainly that the task is beyond his powers!

## VII.

THE next one of "the best judges" who deserves attention, is Mr. H. A. Clapp, who appeared by special editorial announcement, in the Boston *Daily Advertiser* of May 18, of which eminent paper he is understood to be the dramatic critic. He is also known as a fine lecturer on Shakespeare.

It is simply sorrowful to find him on the woolsack with Mr. Appleton Morgan, in such a trial. The *Advertiser* itself is a comfort among journals, and its dramatic notices especially have always seemed to me unexcelled for judiciousness and charm. Alas! to find their graceful author alternately hooting among "the best judges" and hopping

along upon bladders, like a giddy Bassaridé, in a vindictive chase after Mr. Donnelly!

He has over two columns of unqualified condemnation, based upon the initial declaration that "no competent critic will have the patience" to go through the *Great Cryptogram;* so that the world, he avers, will never know whether the author's solutions are justified. Unless Mr. Clapp owns that he is not a "competent critic," in which case he is only an ordinary reviewer, and no good except for defamation, this is tantamount to saying that he has never read the book he is going to criticise. His course is sensible. To read a book, before deciding on its value, interrupts the flowing freedom of one's periods in condemning it. Mr. Clapp's article, apart from its express avowal, shows that this has been his method. It is an interesting confession to start with.

Honest perusal thus given the go-by, for lack of "patience," his plan is to prance hoppety-skip over a small part of the volume, flippantly picking out here and there such phrases as may be used to show that Mr. Donnelly is a multitudinous ignoramus, knowing little or nothing of the rules of mathematics or logic, or matters relating to the text of the plays, and generally incompetent. His aim is to invalidate the book by a series of minute cavils on side issues. Nothing like comprehensive or substantial treatment is even attempted. A few quibbles are all the base of objection. It is told of a gay French editor that, one terribly sultry day, he plumped down at his desk, seized his editorial pen, and shouted, "I am going to give it to the sun

good!" The *Great Cryptogram*, too, has now to catch it, and it appears that this sun is to be judged by its spots. But, as these are mainly Mr. Clapp's ink-spots, and not an essential part of the luminary, I submit that they form no proper basis for its denunciation.

Here are the assaults, seriatim: Mr. Donnelly says that authors have a parental love for their works, citing, as apropos, lines from the Shakespeare Sonnets, such as those which call a writer's thoughts "the children of his brain," or declare them to have a worth which will make them outlive the monuments of princes, etc. "Clear blunderheadedness," Mr. Clapp's retorts, "he mistakes the author's assertion of the enduring worth of his sonnets for an assertion of the worth of his plays." Not at all, and Mr. Clapp here combines essential misrepresentation with flippant insult. Mr. Donnelly, manifestly, cites the sonnet lines to illustrate the general truth that an author's thoughts are to him as precious offspring; just as he might have cited lines from Spenser or Shelley, and with no less appositeness. But at any rate it is fine in Mr. Clapp to assume, for a basis, that an author does not necessarily love "the children of his brain." He ought to have known that "the contrary opinion of critics," and "the almost universally accepted belief," which he as gratuitously as insolently reproaches Mr. Donnelly for "never having heard of," are mighty poor evidence that Shakespeare, whoever he was, did not cherish his plays; and also mighty good evidence the fool-killer is as sound asleep as Frederick ossa in his cavern. Meanwhile, how does any

awkwardness in illustration, even if it existed, or any possible ignorance of "the opinion of critics," or of "universally accepted (and highly asinine) beliefs, affect the substantial value of the *Great Cryptogram?* Really the *non-sequitur* here is so gross as to suggest the *non compos!*

The reviewer's labors continue with the assertion that Mr. Donnelly beginning his toils on the cipher by "picking out words without the help of a concordance," shows what sort of a mind he has. The information in regard to this piece of oafishness, or leaden stupidity, is derived from the book, and is flat misrepresentation. Mr. Donnelly simply says that when he began, fifteen years ago, to look over the plays for surface indications of a cipher, he had no concordance:—naturally enough, being then in a lonely mansion, in Minnesota, on the banks of the Mississippi. This petty perversion shows the spirit in which his critic assails him.

Mr. Clapp next shows that Ford in the *Merry Wives* buffets himself on the forehead, crying "peere-out," in allusion to the horns of his cuckoldry, and derides Mr. Donnelly mercilessly for having failed to catch the meaning of his exclamation, and also for considering it a "forced" expedient to get a word for the second syllable of Shakespeare's name. Here is another mountain made out of a mole hill! At most the error pointed out is a mere misreading—a solitary mistake too small for more than good-natured correction without comment. But in regard to the phrase, "peere-out," Mr. Donnelly is plainly right, for while it is well enough, it shows more ingenuity than felicity, and is certainly sufficiently "forced"

into the text to attract attention by its peculiarity. Horns do not naturally "peer," Mr. Clapp, though eyes do!

Mr. Donnelly is next accused of "ignorance" or "foolishness" for noticing, as a similar peculiarity, the evident dragging in of a name in the *Merry Wives*. The host bombastically bawls to Dr. Caius —"Is he dead, my Ethiopian? Is he dead, my *Francisco?* Ha, bully! What says my Esculapius?" "As there is no Francisco in the play," observes Mr. Donnelly, "this is all rambling nonsense, and the word seems dragged in for a purpose." "And what pray," retorts Mr. Clapp, "is the quality of the Host's rhodomontade? Is not Ethiopian also dragged in?" Softly, good critic! As the jolly host is spouting buffoonery, he may, with artistic propriety, call Dr. Caius, "my Ethiopian;" he may also, with even better cause, call him "my Esculapius;" and he might further call him "my iguanodon," or "my trilobite;" or "my right-angled triangle," or "my cassowary," or "my jub-jub bird;" but the odd reason there is in nonsense forbids him to call him "my Francisco," since it is not in the category of mere nonsense words, as one would think Mr. Clapp might see. To a cipher hunter the introduction of a proper name here is certainly suspicious, being incongruous and peculiar, and forming, you might say, a protuberance on the level surface of the text.

Mr. Donnelly, having had the temerity to think it singular that Falstaff's theiving crew should be mentioned as "St. Nicholas' clerks," unless the word "Nicholas" was wanted for the cipher, (St. Anthony being the true scampsman's patron), is next

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contemptuously told that, "Reference to any well annotated edition would have taught him that the phrases 'St. Nicholas' clerks' and 'St. Nicholas' knights' were common slang of the day for thieves and robbers." Reference to any well annotated edition would have taught him nothing of the kind; see, for example, Howard Staunton, a prince of Shakespeare editors, whose note on the subject is to the effect that making St. Nicholas the tutelary guardian of cut-purses, as two old authors he cites have improperly done, has never been satisfactorily explained.

The next charge made against the book is too trivial and merely nagging to deserve notice. Mr. Donnelly's point is to show the forced use of language by which the name of "Bacon" or "Bacon's son" is got into the text. The sentence is Falstaff's chaff of the men he is robbing. "On, Bacons, on! What, ye knaves?" etc. To call the travelers "Bacons" because well-fed, certainly seems a forced use of language. But Mr. Donnelly is picked out as no sort of a critic, but rather an inexpressible simpleton, for remarking that it does not seem a term of contumely, such as Falstaff would naturally use, and hence is brought in somewhat arbitrarily for the sake of getting the word. After all, it is only a matter of opinion, and the point to be settled is whether "Bacons," used as an epithet, does not denote a constraint of language, which it surely seems to do. If it does not, Mr. Donnelly is not, therefore, proved a fool, as his critic ought to know.

"These," says Mr. Clapp, summing up at this point, "are 'specimen bricks' from the edifice of Mr.

Donnelly's argument." It is no dearest foe of the charming critic of the *Advertiser*—it is himself, perhaps, in this, his own worst enemy, who thus presents him in the character of the comic numbskull of Aristophanes, who comes in upon the stage, amidst the laughter of the ages, offering a brick from the core as a specimen of the marble temple. One would think so bright a man would never choose to follow in the footsteps of such an illustrious predecessor as the farcial old *skolastikos*. Surely a few of the minor components of a book, much less its possible mistakes, can not be justly held to represent the entire structure. And what are these "specimen bricks" from the Donnelly edifice? Six little errors, all but one doubtful, and three of them Mr. Clapp's own! All else of varied and solid excellence absolutely ignored.

As if, at this stage of the indictment, he misgave himself that his basis for condemnation was too meager, he proceeds to strengthen it by another instance of the author's "ignorance and folly," which he thinks establishes the mental kinship of Mr. Donnelly to Lord Dundreary. In detailing how he worked out the cipher, Mr. Donnelly relates, with a good deal of naiveté, how he discovered (thus avoiding being led into a plausible error) that because the tenth word of a column from the top is word ten, you can not, therefore, obtain the tenth word from the bottom of a column by simply subtracting ten from the whole number. He speaks of this as "a curious fact," which it certainly is in the sense of the word as he uses it, that is, odd, though, of course, like everybody else, he knows the very

simple and obvious *rationalè* of it. But Mr. Clapp, intent upon letting loose the theater guffaw upon him, commences operations by quoting his word "curious" in capitals,—a paltry little trick, which has the effect of giving to a lightly used term a solemnity of import which makes its author seem ridiculous. He then proceeds to establish Mr. Donnelly's likeness as a reasoner to the stage Dundreary, who counts five fingers on his right hand, counts backward the other five from the tenth finger, adds the numeral six thus obtained to the five, and asks, "where's the other finger?" This stroke of comic sophistry, offered as ironical argument, may make the groundlings laugh, but must make the judicious grieve. Mr. Clapp, in truth, should have been ashamed to offer it, for he knows perfectly well that it establishes, in seriousness, no parallel between the bright author of *Atlantis* and the poor softie of the upper ten; and that the one taking care against confounding counting with subtraction is no twin to the other, puzzling himself with a figment of his own inanity.

The smart verbiage against the validity of the cipher which follows is trifling in quantity and quality, and may be passed over until Mr. Clapp has swept aside Messrs. Colbert and Bidder, who are decidedly lions in his way. His whole article, of over two columns, is composed entirely of the petty cavils I have cited, and three or four others no more important. For example, that Mr. Donnelly can not have found a Baconian cipher, because Bacon says that a cipher, meaning a cipher in general, "should be easy and not laborious to write," whereas

the insertion of this would have cost the assiduous labor of months. As if a cipher story containing the marvelous history of Bacon's life and times, of which the first installments only are as yet given were not worth the assiduous labor of months. As, if the "easy" ciphers mentioned in the *De Augmentis*, precluded difficult ciphers, when a deeper secrecy became necessary! As if Bacon did not mention another class of ciphers so laborious that, as he says, they "exclude the decipherer!" For example again, that there could not be a cipher for Mr. Donnelly to find, because the edition is full of gross errors of all kinds, this being one of Mr. Appleton Morgan's quiddities. As if the terribly corrupt state of Dante's text prevented it from being made the receptacle of Dante's ciphers, some of which the elder Rossetti has exposed! As if Montaigne, in Bacon's own time, had not said, with, as I think, a most significant oblique look at some of the plays which make up this very first folio, "I have known authors who, by a knack of writing, have got both title and fortune, yet disown their apprenticeship, *purposely corrupt their style*, and affect ignorance of so vulgar a quality."

But enough. It can be admitted that Mr. Clapp has made in his article a poignant omelette, but the eggs are from a mare's nest. His phillipic is a palpable absurdity compounded of little absurdities. The main wonder about it is that any considerable number of people should have swallowed it, for it appears that it has been greatly admired, and that its "specimen bricks" were considered to have quite demolished the *Great Cryptogram*. In Boston,

and the many satellite towns which surround that urban planet, it seems to have divided admiration with a two-and-a-half column article, small type, in the *Daily Globe* of May 27, full of "specimen bricks" to throw at Mr. Donnelly, and much heralded as the work of Mr. George H. Richardson. I read this production attentively, and forbear descant on its elaborate impotence. One of its admirers called it "the death-knell of Donnelly's volume," which made me think of the sonorous bell invented by a man in Pennsylvania, composed of a sheep's trotter hung in an old felt hat. The solemn tolling of such an instrument would be akin to "the death-knell of Donnelly's volume" sounded by this ringing review.

## VIII.

ANOTHER of "the best judges" is the reviewer of the New York *Herald* (May 6,) who occupies five mortal columns, small type, in deploying the variety and extent of his misinformation on Bacon-Shakespeare matters in general. The article is apparently not written by one of the *Herald* staff, a racy tribe, but by some one of the class known ironically as "literary fellers." Nothing more misleading has probably been published, and one marvels that the magnificent circulation of the *Herald* should have been given to the dissemination of such egregious flubdub. The radical ignorance which pervades the whole composition like a vicious humor, and breaks out everywhere in a copious rash of sophisms, falsehoods and perversions, is illustrated by a single rejoinder, which aims to combine serious fact with withering witticism. Mr. Donnelly had mentioned the circumstance that the name of

Shakespeare in the sixteenth century was considered the quintessence of vulgarity — what was called "vile" — just as Snooks, Ramsbottom or Hogsflesh would be with us, and so much so that it is on record that a man of that name got it changed to "Saunders," as one more patrician. To which the *Herald* reviewer retorts: "What are we to think of the name of Bacon, which, if it does not mean Hogsflesh, has no meaning whatever?" This is considered a calm and crushing repartee, and its complacent utterer evidently thinks that the name of Bacon is synonymous with smoked pork! The name of Bacon derives from the beech-tree, "beechen," as everybody interested in such matters has long learned. (Consult the old antiquary, Verstagan.) But what are we to think, at the outset, of the qualification of one of "the best judges," who knows so little of the man he is writing about that he does not even know anything of his illustrious name, and fancies it idential with "Hogsflesh"?

All the statements he presents are, without exception, of the same accurate character. One of his two main reasons, for believing that Bacon could not have written the plays, is, that to write them would alone have taken a lifetime; and further that it was not physically possible for any one man to have done the work attributed to these two. The facts to the contrary are,—first, that for at least thirty years Bacon had no all-engrossing employment; secondly, that so far from occupying the allotted term of three-score and ten, the Shakespeare plays were produced between about 1590 and 1612, thus being scattered over a period of only twenty-two

years; and thirdly, that many an author has performed, single-handed, the work of both Bacon and Shakespeare; which, by a count liberal to extravagance, (each play and each treatise being considered a book), would be no more than fifty volumes, and very slender ones at that. The count of the plays of Æschylus is from 90 to 100; of Sophocles, certainly 115; of Calderon, 185; of Lope de Vega, 2,000; of the works of Voltaire, 74 volumes; of Balzac, about 97; of George Sand, 80; and so on. "So much for Buckingham;" but the rest of Colley Cibber's line can not be rung in here, for the *Herald* reveiwer must have already lost his head when he entered upon such a statement.

His second main reason, for believing that Bacon could not have written the plays, is found in the alleged absolute difference in the intellect of the two men, as shown by their respective works. I suppose this is the reason why the unfortunate Shakespereans are kept, as the sailors say, as busy as the devil in a gale of wind, in trying to refute the myriad of identities between the two in idea, thought, expression, vocabulary, point of view, manner of surveying a subject, use of words peculiar to them, particular phrases, and even errors, which the wicked Baconians are forever showering upon them; and which are apparently, (in many cases, indisputably), emanations from a unique mental source. They are always laboring to suppress or explain away these striking parallelisms, which would seem to a plain mind to indicate that there is no essential difference in the intellect of the two men, but that they are one and the same; or as the very knowing

Montaigne significantly hints, in that identical period, "a case of one man who presented himself for another." But no, they are "accidental resemblances;" they are "simple plagiarisms;" they are "such parallels as you can find between writers in any age;" they are examples, as one bright bird has recently said, of how you can always find Bacon in Shakespeare, but never Shakespeare in Bacon! These explanations are terribly barred by the fact that the parallelisms are not occasional, but exist by hundreds. Mr. Donnelly's book contains a formidable array of them, nearly all striking, intimate, palpable in identity. Mrs. Pott shows in her edition of the *Promus*, a multitude of Shakespeare thoughts, hints, expressions, neologisms, previously existing in Lord Bacon's private note-book. But better than even these, powerful as they are, are the series of analogies, too subtle and interior, and too massive and comprehensive to be accounted for as accidental, or plagiarized, or imitated. Many of them are pointed out by some of the great German scholars, such as Gervinus, or Dr. Kuno Fischer of Heidelberg. For example, that the natural history of the human passions, which Bacon severely criticises Aristotle for not supplying, broadly intimates to be extant and an integral and necessary part of his own philosophy, and circumstantially describes, has been exactly produced in the plays of Shakespeare. For another example, the lack of intimate intellectual sympathy with the Greek mind, and the conspicuous affinity with the Roman, in both authors. Again, the theory, peculiar to both, and in both exactly the same, that character is the result of natural

temperament and historical position, and destiny the result of character. Further, such a point as the perception of the central secret of Cæsar's mental constitution, namely, his blindness through self-love to danger, contempt for which threw him at length under the knives of the conspirators; a perception perfectly unique and almost miraculous in its penetrant subtlety, considering the complexity of the make-up of the great Roman, and which Bacon and Shakespeare have in common. And for another instance, equally striking and original, take Bacon's mention of Mark Antony, as one of only two signally great public men who ever yielded to the "mad excess of love;" together with his saying, in the same essay, that love is "sometimes like a siren, sometimes like a fury;" — the play of *Antony and Cleopatra* being written to make both of these propositions dramatically evident. In a word, so far from there being an apparently absolute difference in the two intellects, the evidences of their similarity are so conspicuous and numerous, that were simple ignorance substituted for indurated prepossession, everyone would readily conclude from them that Bacon and Shakespeare were only different names for the same man.

Some glittering generalities the *Herald* reviewer sprays the public with in this connection, which make one suspect that after all, though he makes the antithesis one of substantial intellect, he means that Bacon and Shakespeare are radically different in style or manner. Not as much as he fancies, as witness the Rev. Mr. Bengough's admirable versifications of some

of Bacon's paragraphs, given in last year's August number of the *Bacon Journal*. Here is a sample:

"Who taught the raven in a drought to throw pebbles into a hollow tree where she spied water, that the water might rise so that she might come to it? Who taught the bee to sail through such a vast sea of air, and to find the way from a field in flower, a great way off, to her hive? Who taught the ant to bite every grain of corn she buries in her hill, lest it should take root and grow?"—*Advancement of Learning.*

Here is Mr. Bengough's rendering:

"Who taught the thirsty raven in a drought,
Espying water in a hollow tree,
To throw in pebbles till it reached her beak?
Who taught the bee to sail through seas of air,
And find her far-off hive from fields in flower?
Who taught the ant to bite each grain of corn
She buries in her hill, lest it take root?"

No one, not destitute of sense, can fail to see that only Mr. Bengough's versification was necessary to bring out the Shakesperean quality of Bacon's lines. Nevertheless, I will never admit the fairness and justice, not to say common sense, of exacting an external resemblance between the prose of Bacon and the verse of Shakespeare, until the accomplished *Herald* reviewer will show the likeness between even a man's own work in the two forms:—between Coleridge in his prose *Aids to Reflection* and Coleridge in his poem *Kubla Khan;* or Milton in his enchanting *Comus*, and Milton in his blaring *Tetrachordon.* Who that ever read the wonderful letters of Lord Byron, with their vast gayety and reality, their good salt savor of the world and life, their infinite and brilliant diversity, would possibly imagine, if *Childe Harold* had been published anonymously, that all that somber and oceanic grandeur had swept from

the same mind? To exact that Bacon's prose shall show an exterior likeness to the Shakespeare poetry is supremely ridiculous, though the two will stand the comparison far better than most, as many a good scholar knows. But words are vain to express the utter shallowness and stupidity of insisting on the parallel. The Shakespereolaters, however, are doing it constantly. Why don't they pull out the roots of their hair with tweezers if they want to appear intellectual, and not resort to such futile devices as these?

The *Herald* reviewer's pudding is full of plums in the part where he contrasts Bacon with Shakespeare. One is that Bacon "pays no homage to the imagination," a Delphic line which means, I suppose, that in him the faculty is subordinate or nonexistent. On the contrary, Bacon's imagination is tremendous. The *Novum Organum* is the proof of it — a creation like a world. "He has thought," says Taine, "in the manner of artists and poets, and he speaks after the manner of prophets and seers." In his mind the imagination is the all; the other faculties are the spicula, the accessories of it, and surcharged with its mighty magnetic life.

Another plum is that Shakespeare's genius is "essentially dramatic, with all the faults and limitations of the stage." How perfectly, how eloquently, Charles Lamb has smashed this preposterous affirmation, in the essay where he shows how impossible of representation, how infinitely beyond all stage capacity and conditions, how absolutely addressed to the rapt imagination of the private reader, are the great plays! No wonder that Herr Benedix can demonstrate that they violate or transcend all stage

requirements; no wonder that the stage managers never let the curtain rise on some of them, and cut, slash, and more or less transmogrify the others. For they are not "essentially dramatic," they are too vastly ideal; too subtle and colossal for the theater; and, however much the author may be a dramatist, he is infinitely more a dramatist to the mind. It is not as a skilled playwright, but as a mighty poet, that he has his hold upon us.

Among the other plums is the reviewer's assertion that "there is nothing in Bacon that might not have been written by dozens of philosophers since Aristotle." One would like to see those philosophers: Would the reviewer kindly send us up a dozen on the half shell?. To think of the dazzling, stupendous panegyric piled to the one only memory of Bacon by the wise and great of every succeeding age and every land, and then to think of such an estimate and such reviewing! But it is quite equaled by the assertion following, that "there are hundreds of passages in Shakespeare that no man or demigod before him could have conceived." This is pure rhodomontade. Shakespeare is simply one of a limited number of supreme poets, just as great as he, among whom are Homer, Æschylus, Lucretius, Juvenal, the unknown author of Job, Isaiah, Ezekiel and Dante; and there are no passages of his superior in poetic power and beauty to theirs. It is conceded by all high criticism.

The reviewer has one saving grace: he does not expressly deny the existence of the cipher story in the plays, as some of his impudent confreres have done, though he does not admit it, and aims to flout

and belittle it, sneering at it as "wretched flimsy tattle." So far as deciphered, it is, as before said, a series of recitals, which begin, so to speak, in the middle of events, and tell of Shakespeare's lawless and dissolute youth; of his raid upon Sir Thomas Lucy's estate; of the subsequent battle between his party and the gamekeepers, in which he is wounded; of his flight to London and employment at the theater; of his making a great hit, in due time, by playing Falstaff, which Bacon conceived on the suggestion of his personal appearance; of his enforced marriage to Ann Hathaway, who was with child by him; of his gross life and maladies; of Cecil seeing sedition in the play of *Richard II.*, and writing to the Queen, denouncing both Marlowe and Shakespeare as merely covers for Bacon; of the prosecution of Dr. Heyward as an accomplice and the personal assault upon him by the Queen with her crutch; of the occupation of the theater by troops, the flight of the actors, the danger and despair of Bacon, the orders for the arrest and torture of Shakespeare, his escape to France, etc. Now why this extremely novel, interesting and picturesque narrative should be described as "wretched, flimsy tattle," no one can say, but I will engage that if it told in favor of Shakespeare, instead of against him, we should never hear a word to its discredit. And as the reviewer tacitly accepts, in Mr. Donnelly's own words, what the remainder is to contain—a recital of "the inner life of kings and queens, the highest, perhaps the basest of their kind;" of the first colonization of the American continent, in which Bacon and Raleigh were prominent; of "the

Spanish Armada;" of the war of the Huguenots under Henry of Navarre against the League, in which several of the Elizabethan men took part; of Bacon's downfall under King James, and the rest; it is still more difficult to see how such a tale can be included under epithets of dishonor like "wretched, flimsy tattle."

The character given Cecil, Bacon's deadly and malicious enemy, is discredited by the reviewer as new to history. It is, he says, "as fanciful as Iago." It is nothing of the kind. When Cecil died, Bacon, without naming him, drew the same character in his essay *On Deformity*, and the London reading public, recognizing the portrait, laughed in scorn at its felicity. The reviewer represents further, as against the reality of the cipher, that, supposing Bacon to have been convicted of sedition and treason, the motive to destroy him "in that liberal and wholesome period," and the power to do so, were alike wanting. Then how did Southwell and Campian come to the rack, and Norfolk and Essex to the block, and a multitude of others of note suffer bloody and violent deaths under Elizabeth? "That liberal and wholesome period!" God save us!

The reviewer admits with a curiously meek and helpless irrelevance all the sordid, vulgar, profane details of Shakespeare's personal life and surroundings at Stratford, as indeed he must, for they have been mainly accumulated by the greatest Shakespeare scholars, men like Halliwell-Phillips, Howard Staunton, and others; and the Baconians have had nothing to do with gathering them. They are entirely unrelieved, as those of his later life also

are, by detail of a higher and purer moral quality; and it is a nice reviewer that, having to admit them, thinks he can make them compatible with Shakespeare's reputed genius and the vast exaltation of the plays. The anomaly they constitute is solitary in the history of literature, and has made every thinker recoil.

A fumbling and nerveless effort is next made to maintain that learning was as accessible to Shakespeare as to Chatterton and Burns, and that he had acquired it. Everyone who knows anything of the conditions of that time, knows that the difficulties of such an acquisition were far greater then than now; but no man in any time, especially Elizabeth's, could get learning without leaving a trail. Shakespeare has left none. From the filthy, savage, bookless hole of a town where he had passed a rough, wild youth, he comes to London, and before long produces an extended poem in the most elegant English of his time, without a trace of the uncouth Warwickshire dialect, full of classic reminiscence and allusion, and redolent of classic grace and charm. How could he have done it? It is impossible. He was not the man. And what have Burns and Chatterton to do with the case? We know just what they were taught, and how, and where. They were not learned at all; they were only fairly educated, and their attainments were no more than commensurate with their literary achievement. Burns was simply a fine lyric poet, exquisite in his Ayrshire dialect, commonplace in English; his whole merit, apart from his sturdy manliness, lying in his command of a wild skylark music—a power of verbal lilt hardly comparable.

Chatterton was an unearthly boy, with a marvelous faculty for catching the spirit and tone of antique poems, which he imitated in forgeries, not quite skillful enough to escape detection. What parallel is there between them and the continental Shakespeare? What analogy between their known acquirement, such as it is, and the unaccountable learning of the plays, which is prodigious in every direction; which, as Miss Bacon nobly says, lies thickly strewn on the surface of all the earlier plays, and in the later has disolved and gone into the clear intelligence? Take but a single province: law. Better than Lord Campbell, Mr. Rushton of Liverpool, has, if the lapse of years lets me remember rightly, shown Shakespeare's involved mastery of all the depths and breadths of English jurisprudence; and others, like Armitage Brown, that he even knew the local law of French and Italian towns. A marvel of it, too, is that it is always accurate. He is the only signal instance of a literary man who has touched law without blunders. Godwin was a powerful and highly trained mind, but his novel, *Caleb Williams*, is a legal impossibility, with its hero tried again for a murder of which he had been once acquitted! Thackeray, so worldly wise and knowing, makes property fail of the heir, because the donor in dying leaves only his clearly attested oral desire as to its disposition;—a ruling at which all the wise old owls of the Bench would hoot in chorus. So with all English writers, however bright, who have dabbled in law. Shakespeare alone is unimpeachable. Where did he get this mighty erudition? Genius, however great, could not give it to him. It comes

alone by hard and special study. Where and how could he make that study without leaving a record? And where did he get the learning to enable him to acquire the learning? For in that time the law was all in Norman-French, law Latin or barbarous Latinized English. The law of the immediate past, as in the great treatises, such as Glanville and Bracton, was wholly in law Latin. The year books, or reports of cases, from Edward I. to Henry VIII., a period of over 200 years, and following them the reports or commentaries of Coke, Plowden, Dyer, reaching to the times of Elizabeth and James, were in Norman-French. The elaborate and intimate satire in *Hamlet*, of the proceedings in the case of *Hales* v. *Petit*, involved a knowledge of the report in Plowden, where it appears in that language. Whatever else there was of law, outside of the French and Latin, was in an English so crabbed with Latinized terms that none but lawyers could understand it. What trace has the man Shakespeare left, what trace could he fail to leave, of his struggle to acquire these tongues? And yet we are told of his similitude to Chatterton and Burns! Go in peace, *Herald* reviewer! The man that knew that world of law, that knew all those other worlds of learning, was not a Chatterton, nor a Burns; nor was he by any discoverable sign or token, the man of Stratford either.

It is not ingenuous in the reviewer to sneeringly term, at a later stage of his article, the details of Shakespeare's early life in London, Mr. Donnelly's "discoveries." They are not his discoveries at all, save in circumstantiality; but substantially the vulgar

facts collected by all the Shakespeare scholars from Theobald, Malone and Stevens downward; and all that Mr. Donnelly makes of them is to put them forward as palpably incongruous with the claims made for Shakespeare's august genius; though his critic states, without the least warrant, that they are brought up as so many slop pails to empty over the poor young scamp of Stratford. He thinks Shakespeare could not have been the baddish youth Mr. Donnelly, together with the students and the facts, finds him, because when he arrived in London, a famished runaway, he did not at once become a footpad and take the crooked path to the gallows. He holds him singularly courageous and noble because he married the woman he had wronged, and held horses at the theater for a living, instead of deserting her and making straight for Tyburn. Although the marriage seems to have been compulsory, and the horse-holding as lucrative as necessary, his course, as nobody denies, was commendable enough, though not deserving of the preposterously fervent eulogies of the reviewer, who even calls his very ordinary good conduct, "Shakesperean." Far less commendatory, though stoutly defended as by a true devil's attorney, is his outrageous usury: so outrageous that it seems to have become a public scandal at the time, and subjected him to the flings of his acquaintance, and the biting mockery of the Ratsei pamphleteer. To this it appears must also be added skinflint avarice and miserly parsimony. All of it the reviewer excuses and defends, even extols, as "eminently Shakesperean," on the ground that Shakespeare had to make money; that it was

his own no matter how gotten, and that he had a right to be as usurious as he pleased. To complete the defense other literary men are spattered—Voltaire for his perfectly legitimate speculations; Wordsworth for nobly requiring his guests to pay for other food than he had means to give them; Byron for wanting money that he had grandly earned, etc. Therefore are they put into the category of the Stratford Shylock. In addition, the reviewer, of course, must include in this rogues' gallery, Bacon, for "taking bribes," a charge which is the stock in trade of Shakesperean sciolists, and simply an ignorant lie. It is fairly in consonance with these gallant pleas that Shakespeare, when living at the great New Place, and nuzzling in wealth, should be defended for increasing his slender income by using the fine mansion, which afterward lodged a princess, for the brewing of malt and its sale to lowly customers. The defense is made to include his furnishing a clergyman, his guest, with sack and claret and making the town pay for them. Of course, Mr. Donnelly only cites these actions, not to object to them as such, but to put their petty sordor and meanness in proper contrast with the lustrous character accorded to the great poet. The incongruity would seem apparent. Imagine the magnificent Raleigh personally brewing and selling malt in Durham House. Fancy the majestic Verulam trying his hand at it in the kitchens of Gorhambury. And Shakespeare before the ages has a port no less ideal and lofty than these. But no, says the *Herald* reviewer, there is no incompatibility; the only question is: "Was Shakespeare's beer well brewed;

was the malt honest, and did he give good measure?" And he charges that Shakespeare,—engaged in the picayune business of brewing, like Burns' Willie, "a peck of malt" in his own fine house, and peddling it out to his poor neighbors,—is actually "accused (by Mr. Donnelly) of engaging in an honest employment and selling the results of his industry for gain!" Then, to clinch the assertion that picking up pennies, by making and selling malt in the grand family house, is an action on the part of the opulent Shakespeare not at all mean in itself, nor out of keeping with the grandeur of his genius, we are reminded that the "shining Prince Bismarck" derives an income from the making of whisky. If this be true, it is no more than might be expected from the *gelt*-loving old wehr-wolf, who has turned sad Europe into a camp, and would fain make his bloody ravin on Republics; but it forms no sort of excuse for the shabby disgrace of the man Shakespeare.

The attempt to impugn Mr. Donnelly for criticising Shakespeare's dishonest attempt to edge into the aristocracy by fraudulently obtaining a coat of arms from the Herald's College, is nothing but a bit of awkward shuffling with words. Shakespeare is not accused of seeking social elevation; he is accused, and, what is more, convicted, of trying, with the aid of John Dethick, a rascally Garter King at Arms, to get armorial bearings by fraud and falsehood. The evidence in the matter is fully given, with fatal candor, by Halliwell-Phillips, the highest modern Shakespeare authority, and also in full detail by Howard Staunton, an equally unimpeachable scholar.

The five columns of calumniation which compose the review end with something truly beautiful. The

writer is descanting on the mystery which surrounds the personality of Shakespeare. We know all about the other great men of the time. Essex, Bacon, Raleigh, Casaubon, Sidney, are, he says, perfect individualities to us. But when we look at Shakespeare, the figure is dim. We see, what? "Only the light!" This is certainly lovely. I remember that at the time of Thackeray's death, some charming verses, with the same idea, I think by Mr. Stoddard, appeared in one of the journals. The poet beholds the laureled ones in their Valhalla: there is Homer, there is Dante, there are they all, one by one, and there

> "There — little seen but light—
> The only Shakespeare is."

It is a graceful fancy, but as a means of accounting for the absence of information about a man it is certainly novel. To the ordinary mind, the "light" about the personal Shakespeare is very much like the light seen about a bad lobster in a dark cellar, and, to one conversant with the details of his unsavory biography, there is a smell also. The talk about his obscurity is utter fustian. In the first place, such a man as he *could* not be obscure. Living in the midst of a crowded center like London, and his reputed plays enjoying a great popularity, he would become at once the object of intense curiosity, and everything would be known about him that there was to know. Any person of gumption must feel that if we have not learned something different in kind about him, it is because there is no more to learn. But secondly, it is not true that we are without his memoirs; we have an ample biography of

him, and, if it is perplexing, it is only because it is misread, or its significance evaded. The labors of the Shakespeare society, and of numerous scholars and antiquaries, in several countries, have resulted in a considerable mound of details; and if much of this is only traditional, it must be borne in mind that genuine tradition, as, if I remember rightly, Sir George Cornewall Lewis has superbly proved, possesses all the force of history. The only trouble with the Shakespeare biography is that it is all one way in kind; and whenever any new particulars are brought to light, they are invariably of the same sort, and leave the biography still all one way. In a word, the zealous labors of his friends, for two centuries, have only shown that personally he was a perfect vulgarian. There is no getting away from the fact, and it is as idle to say that we have not the fullest evidence of it, as it is that we are so deficient in our knowledge of him as to see nothing but the light of his reputed works, when we look in his direction. And to refer the absence of creditable information respecting him to his personal modesty, and a desire to keep in the background, is particularly fine in the *Herald* reviewer, fresh from allowing and justifying his attempt to render himself exceedingly conspicuous by getting a grant of nobility from the armorial college! It is also particularly fine in the reviewer to assert that the tone in which "he was addressed by those who knew him was invariably that of awe." Bacon, indeed, as his sour contemporary Osborne relates of him, "struck all men with an awful reverence;" and Ben Jonson shows him to us at his birthday festival, "standing

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amidst the smile of the fires, the wine, the men, as if he did a mystery." But how many are there who knew the man Skakespeare, to speak of him other than with disrespect and contempt? "Stageplayer! Mummer!" — His kinsman, Ryc Quyney, hisses at him when denied, I believe, a loan. "An upstart crow . . . in his own conceit the only *Shake-scene* in the country," snarls Greene. "One who feeds on men," the bitter ghost of Ratsei brands him. Manifestly feigning in his verse, in his prose Ben Jonson speaks of him only as an actor, (strange that this manifest fact has not been noticed,) patronizes him, with marked superciliousness, flouts at him, mocks at his blundering tongue, says his talk had often to be "snuffed out," excuses his shortcomings with good-natured half-contempt, vents on him praise in pompous irony. Where is the "awe?" Sometimes, it is true, he is mentioned pleasantly. Henry Chettle, writing very diplomatically and guardedly, as one who knew of him only or mainly by report, speaks of him as an excellent actor, as known for "his facetious grace in writing," and in good repute for fair dealing. But who is he that ever mentioned him in a tone of "awe?"

Such is the reviewer, who has the advantage of five columns in a widely spread journal, to injure Mr. Donnelly's book by specious defamation. The fact that the greater number of people are not, and can not be expected to be conversant with the facts of the matter, and can therefore be misled by the falsest representations, is the only consideration which renders the article of the slightest importance. That a work of sterling excellence and value should

be subject to the assault, and receive the injury of such a Jack o' lantern brigade of lies, is sufficient comment on the precious system of reviewing.

IX.

ANOTHER of "the best judges" is the very nearly three-column judge of the New York *Tribune* (May 13). In Anstey's extremely original and amusing novel, *The Fallen Idol*, a great effect is produced by the author insisting on the perpetual diabolic expression of the carven image, which seems to suggest something sentient, something at once living and dead, and through all the maze of the story, is ever present to the mind of the reader. An exactly similar, supercilious, infernal, immobile smirk seems immutably fixed on the physiognomy of this amiable article. The author appears to aim at conquering, not by his facts, which, like the darkey's, are false, nor by his arguments, which are of the infant school, but by an overbearing smug serenity of literary deportment, which is truly insufferable. He is calm, he is satisfied, he is softly simpering, he is inexpressibly superior, and he fronts what he thinks the poor little doggish group of Baconians, as Memnon fronts the generations. Through all the monotonous, imperturbable, condesending flow of his bland babble runs still an under murmur, telling of their abjectness, their worthlessness, their insanity, their blindness; and yet they have seemed, even to some of their antagonists, no inconsiderable beings. We need not allude to the great number of intellectual and accomplished men and women in private life who accept this theory. We need not even mention the formal advocates, such as Delia

Bacon, with her noble clouded ideality, struck through with such lightnings of insight as seldom make splendid any brain; nor Judge Holmes, with his solid learning and sterling sense, whose book a *Tribune* reviewer had once to brassily falsify before he could even try to answer; nor even Mrs. Pott, whose marvelous power of patient research, equal in itself to genius, is coupled with the most delicate and unerring perception. But there is Leconte de Lisle, incomparable but for Victor Hugo, among the French poets, who has the dazzling honor of being the successor to Victor Hugo's chair in the French Academy, and he has declared unequivocally against the Shakespereans. There is Dr. Kuno Fischer, of Heidelberg, illustrious now above the modern German philosophers, as the expounder of Kant, who, not long since, was announced to lecture in support of the Baconian theory. There is James Nasmyth, the broad-brained Scotchman, famous as an astronomer, the inventor of the steam pile-driver, the steam hammer, improved ordnance, telescopes, what not, whose practical mind saw the same truth. There is Lord Palmerston, the embodiment of the strong British common sense, and he, too, was a Baconian. There is Sir Patrick Colquhoun, one of the most eminent of English publicists, who has added his name to the Baconian roster by his lecture, a couple of years since, before the Royal Society of Literature in London. There, as said already, is Charlotte Cushman, the powerful actress, whom the stage and the play-goer will long remember. There is General Butler (O rare Ben Butler!), whose full mental worth will not be known until some publisher has the wit

to urge him to collect into a volume his trenchant literary essays, such as his cogent defense of the slandered Byron. And there, to go no further, is that justice of our Supreme Court, who most in mind resembles Marshall, and who long since gave in his adhesion, on judicial grounds, to the cause of Bacon. But no; the *Tribune* reviewer sees them only to contemn; he surveys them from aloft, with his supercilious, *Fallen Idol*, conceited smirk and stare; his style puts on for them the gold-rimmed monocle, the contumelious single eye-glass; for him they are "the Baconians;" and with unrelenting calm he breathes out, in his dead-level society voice, that their minds are "abnormally constituted," that they are all "narrowness and triviality;" above all, that they are "color-blind." This withering epithet he thinks so felicitous that he repeats it no less than six times in his comparatively short article; and lest its natural force be abated, he explains that "mental color-blindness consists in inability to distinguish between strongly opposed literary styles; between radically different intellectual expressions." Thus, we suppose, that when the "abnormally constituted" Baconian notes that Bacon says that Aristotle thinks young men unfit to hear moral philosophy, and that Shakespeare also says that Aristotle thinks young men unfit to hear moral philosophy, and that the error of using the word "moral" instead of "political" is committed by both Bacon and Shakespeare, it only shows that he is "color-blind"—that is, unable "to distinguish between radically different intellectual expressions!" And when the "narrow and trivial" Baconian rolls

up page upon page of twin locutions, epigrams, metaphors, axioms, proverbs and apothegms from Bacon and Shakespeare, which are palpably different modes of the same mind, and just as much alike as Bacon speaking prose and Bacon intoning verse, each citation only further shows that he is "color-blind"—that is, unable to "distinguish between strongly opposed literary styles!" But for a full rejoinder, it is quite sufficient to think of the shining list of Baconians I have named—Leconte de Lisle, Palmerston, Kuno Fischer, Nasmyth, and the rest,—and to imagine persons, so sane and strong in intellect as they, stigmatized as "abnormally constituted," full of "narrowness and triviality," and so "mentally color-blind" that they can not tell one thing from another, all by such a little Hindu eidolon as this *Tribune* reviewer!

Further on, with the air of one who has invented and orders up the terrible Zalinski gun, which on its first trial scooped with a single shot a cavern in a cliff, he brings in for the demolition of the Baconians, the formidable Dr. Ingleby, whom he calls "a ripe Shakesperean scholar." To wheel up and unlimber such an oracle is truly unfortunate. Of all the "ripe Shakesperean scholars," Dr. Ingleby is the one that has the least force, and is weak even to silliness. His quality is shown by his most famous book, the *Centurie of Prayse*, in which he aims to show how truly great Shakespeare was; and, indirectly, how certainly he was the author of the plays, by citing all the references made to him, and his reputed works, during twenty-three years of his life, and for seventy-seven years after his death.

These references he calls "praise." Here are specimens of some that he includes under this title. His book not being at hand, I quote from a volume in which they are collated by one who holds him in veneration.

"William Payne, in 1642, says 'Shakespeare's plays are better printed than most Bibles.'" Praise!

"George Peele, in 1607, mentions 'Venus and Adonis.'" Praise!

"Thomas Robinson, in 1630, describing the life of a monk, says 'After supper it is usual for him to read a little of Venus and Adonis, or some such scurrilous book.'" Praise!

"A manuscript journal of the Duke of Wurtemberg says, April 30, 1610, 'They play the Moor of Venice at the Globe.'" More praise!

"In a funeral song by Sir William Harbert, in 1594, Shakespeare is rebuked for going into foreign countries for the subjects of his verse." Still more praise!

"In *Mercurius Brittanicus* some one writes, 1644, of 'Ben Jonson and his *uncle* Shakespeare.'" Praise unspeakable!

There are a great many more entries of the same kind. If such tributes do not show Shakespeare's greatness, and prove that Lord Bacon did not write the plays, nothing will. Of these references there are 185. Fifty-seven of them were made during Shakespeare's lifetime. Of course a number of them are complimentary, though, in nearly every instance, as conventionally so as stock puffs; and scarcely any of them—even by hard straining, not more than a dozen—refer to the man, but only to

the books ascribed to him. What their collector thinks he proves by them, and why the merely common-place and derogatory ones are included under the caption of "Praise" is a mystery. The book, in fact, has no earthly merit or significance. It simply shows the calibre of Dr. Ingleby.

A couple of quotations from this redoubtable man are considered sufficient to crush the Baconians, including Mr. Donnelly. One is where he compares them to Macadam's sieves, "which retain only those ingredients unsuited to the end in view." This happy simile is perfectly characteristic of Dr. Ingleby, and it is evident that the *Tribune* reviewer admires and loves him for its felicity. But "the end in view" is to macadamize the road, and does Dr. Ingleby or the reviewer really think it a fault in the sieve that it holds back the materials that are not fit for the purpose? It is a plain road — "as common as the way between St. Alban's and London"— (which it is!) and the Baconians are to make it passable; is it cause for censure that, like Macadam's sieves, they screen out only the proper material for the end in view? Less commendable surely are those sieves, not like Macadam's, wherewith Shakespereans accumulate irrelevant and worthless stuff for their work, like the *Centurie of Prayse* of Dr. Ingleby.

The other passage which the reviewer quotes, from this fine satirist, is one in which, to cite it briefly, he finds Lord Bacon so deficient "in human sympathies," that he could not possibly portray a woman like Miranda, Perdita, Cordelia, or any of the others; and hence to a "thoroughly sane intelligence," modestly implied to be the reviewer's own, is separated

"by an impassable gulf" from the mind that wrote the plays. The delicate "human sympathies" shown by Shakespeare in regard to women, from Ann Hathaway to the wife of the inn-keeper Davenant, are attested by the whole tradition about him, and of course prove his utter qualification for such portrayals. Strange, however, we may say in passing, that the beautiful passages in the third scene of the fourth act of the *Winter's Tale*, where the names of the flowers, their character, their seasonable order, and the sequences in which they are mentioned, are so much the same as in Bacon's essay *On Gardens*, that the wondrous parallel deeply impressed even Spedding, who was no Baconian;—strange that these passages are put into the mouth, and make an integral part of the personality of the exquisite Perdita, whom Dr. Ingleby and his admirer think Bacon could not have portrayed.

To re-enforce heavy artillery with small musketry seems a useless expenditure of ammunition, but this the reviewer does, by here bringing in Richard Grant White to corroborate Dr. Ingleby as to Bacon's want of "human sympathies;"—a man who, as I have said, was a secret Baconian, and secret only because a frank avowal of his disbelief in Shakespeare would have made his editions waste paper. O these Shakespereans! This is the way they can estimate the man who declared his own nature when he wrote in his essay on *Friendship*, "For a crowd is not company, and men's faces are but like pictures in a gallery, and talk only a tinkling cymbal, where there is no love." Here is their latest fetch—to pronounce "deficient in human sympathies" that all-compassionate Bacon whose paramount interest was in

humanity; whose deepest intuitions and divinations, as his *Essays* show, are when he comes into relation with his fellows; whose whole life was avowedly and admittedly devoted, in his own sublime words, to "the relief of the human estate;" he, the knight-errant, solitary and colossal, of the human adventure; he, the very Cid Campeador of the vast scientific battle, still raging, for the victory of the human kind! The world has long agreed with Vanvenargues that "great thoughts come from the heart," and to think that there should be men so dull as to set up that the great thoughts of Bacon — none greater — had no heart to come from! The theme is too much to handle here, but the student of his life can not but at once remember some of its salient points, and marvel that he should be taxed with the lack of all that makes a man most a man. To think of his fond and deep *rapport* with his great brother, Anthony:—"my comfort," he sweetly calls him; and later in life, denotes him with rapt feeling as "my dear brother, who is now with God." To think of his unfailing, his tender and anxious efforts to protect, to succor and save his poor young Catholic friend, the son of the Bishop of Durham, Sir Tobie Mathew; how, when all faces lowered around the young man in his prison, when even his father and mother forsook him as "a pervert," he would not cast him out; how from the jail in which his conscience cast him, he took him to his own house and cherished him; how when in gathering danger, though innocent, from suspicion of complicity with the frightful plot of Catesby and Guy Fawkes, he aided his escape abroad; how he maintained a faithful

and consoling friendship with the poor outlaw through all the years of that sorrowful foreign sojourn; and how, at length, through loyal and untiring endeavor, he procured for him permission to return to his own England, and eat no more that bread of exile Dante found so bitter. And at last, when all was ending, to think how that high heart turned from the many-passioned pageant of service and struggle and glory and noble anguish, which had been his life on earth, from all the airy vision of his immeasurable coming fame and the hopes of heaven, to humbly and with touching pathos leave on record his wish to be buried in the old church at St. Albans, for "there" he says, "was my mother buried," and there he lies close by his mother's grave. O poor, great man, so wanting in "human sympathies!"

The reviewer continues his supercilious but wise and learned efforts to wreak mischief on Mr. Donnelly's book, by admitting that it produces "plenty" of evidence that the writer of the plays was a lawyer, (a damaging admission, one would say, for the case of William Shakespeare); but thinks this countervailed by the "curiously bad law in the *Merchant of Venice*," "with which," he declares "Mr. Appleton Morgan has dealt so fully and ably that there is nothing more to be said about it." The reference is to a long foot note which formed a sad blot in Mr. Morgan's fine book years ago, and Mr. Morgan it appears, continues to treat the point "fully and ably" by recently calling the verdict on Shylock a "most illegal and unrighteous judgment." Unrighteous! This of the verdict on the vindictive,

tive, carnivorous, murder-seeking, pound-of-flesh old Jew! As for its being "illegal," both Mr. Morgan and the reviewer would do well to inquire whether it was so by the legal usage of an Italian court of the sixteenth century. Their contention is that the court scene in the play shows ignorance of English law. I read long ago a full account of the trial of Beatrice Cenci, and such legal proceedings as passed in that Roman court would certainly seem to the *Tribune* reviewer a case of "curiously bad law," if judged by the standards of England, and would in that country be impossible. In fact, the instance really is another proof that the writer of the plays was a master of jurisprudence; that he knew, as his critics do not, the legal usage of continental courts, as well as of English; and, most significant of all, that he had visited Southern Europe with the eye of a lawyer. For an illustration of the differences in procedure, read Mr. J. T. Doyle's admirable paper in the *Overland Monthly* for July, 1866, giving his curious experience in a Spanish court in Nicaraugua. For a statement of the legal theory of the play in which it is shown how law, which is justice, must be tempered with equity, which is mercy —a demonstration which only a mind as great as Bacon's in jurisprudence could have undertaken— read Judge Holmes' masterly exposition in the latest edition of his book on the *Authorship of Shakespeare.*

Having settled with cool nonchalance that the writer of the plays "knew very little law," the reviewer, with the same frigid ease, says that as for his "medical knowledge, there is no reason why he

could not have picked that up!" Dr. Bucknill, one of the most eminent of physicians, has written a book on the greatness of that "medical knowledge," which is rather adverse to this sage suggestion. But doubtless the calm reviewer could see no reason why Dr. Bucknill might not have "picked up" *his* medical knowledge; and, hard, vulgar study not being necessary to learn the art of medicine, why should not Galen and Hippocrates, Rabelais and Sydenham, Abernethy and Astley Cooper, Cabanis and Brown-Sequard, have "picked up" theirs also! From this serene conclusion it is but an easy step, and with easy composure is it taken, to censure Mr. Donnelly for ascribing to Bacon the discovery that heat is a mode of motion. The truth is, he says, that "all Bacon knew on this subject he derived from Plato." Fulgid Hades! home of heat, where cool reviewers go to when they die! Plato! If he had only said Aristotle, who really did have some vague idea, first, perhaps, of any, of the dynamic nature of heat, though he does not express it either clearly or boldly; but Plato! Is it, can it be possible, that this oracular reducer of Bacon to a low denomination, does not know that the doctrine of heat, as a mode of motion, is derived from the great crucial illustration of the working of the Baconian method of discovery in the *Novum Organum?* For this the new instrument is put in motion; at the end of the radiant processes of induction appears this magic flower of flame! See the proud and silent tribute Tyndall renders to Bacon, as the annunciator of the idea, when he prints the glorious Baconian paragraphs at the very outset of his own noble book on the subject!

The antarctic airiness of the highly valuable "best judge" of the *Tribune* is nowhere more destructive than where he essays to freeze out the Donnelly array of parallelisms by asserting their non-significance, as evidences of identity of authorship. It is, of course, manifest that parallelisms may be accounted for as plagiarisms, but where they occur in great quantity, as in Bacon and Shakespeare, and where, as in the works of these two, they are no more than equal to the remainder of the text in which they are embedded, such an explanation of their presence is perfectly untenable. For example, the elegant poems of Owen Meredith are really wonderful for plagiarism; he steals right and left from the British poets, and from the French, Italian and Slavic poets; but we know that his parallelisms are plagiarisms, not only because we find them in the pages whence he appropriated them, but because, though his own poetry has merit, the splendid sentences and phrases he has taken shine in it like jewels in an ash-pan, and are out of consonance with their surroundings. It is not so with the parallelisms of Bacon and Shakespeare, and here Mr. Donnelly is plainly right. He might advance it as an unanswerable reason why he is right, that the identity of the passages is significant of a single authorship, not alone because they are identical, but because they comport in both cases with all of the context; grow inevitably out of it instead of being inserted or stuck on; are never above or below it; achieve originality by sheer appositeness; and, in short, have, in each composition, a perfect mutuality of relation to the whole. It is, therefore, far more

icily superior than irrefragable, in the *Tribune* reviewer, to consider Mr. Donnelly's book as "a study in morbid psychology," and he himself as one to be valued only "for therapeutic purposes," because he ranks as evidences the autorial identities he finds. Nor has the reviewer even any right, in reason, to push these supercilious and insolent phrases to the length of stigmatizing as "incredible absurdity" Mr. Donnelly's suggestion, (it is hardly more, and only voices what several of us have long thought and some said), that Bacon is the real author behind Marlowe, Burton and Montaigne. Scholars who are not Baconians have for a great while been strangely stirred by what seemed the vast anticipation of Shakespeare in Marlowe's pages, shown always in the large rhythms of the Marlovian plays; and at times in striking similarities of thought, cadence, and imagery. It is not time yet to pronounce absolutely, but the learned mind of Bacon is seen palpably, though in negligee, in the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, a book originally issued anonymously. As for Montaigne's *Essays*, the evidences of Bacon's hand in them are so strong, so numerous, and so fortified by external circumstances, that I sometimes wonder anyone can doubt their indication. What does the great Dutch Scholar, Isaac Gruter, the author of the *Inscriptions*, writing in a singular veiled style from The Hague to Dr. Rawley, Bacon's chaplain, a little while, apparently, after Bacon's death, concerning the publication of several of his works in Holland—what does he refer to when he speaks of "the *French interpreter* who patched together Lord Bacon's things and *tacked that motley piece* to him;"

and in the next sentence hopes to get leave to publish "*apart*, that *exotic* work" of his lordship's? What is Lord Bacon's "exotic" work, which has "a motley piece tacked to it" by "a French interpreter?" Lest the reviewer should lose his beautiful, immobile, contumelious smile by a change of countenance, I recommend him not to be too positive that that work is not the so-called *Essays* of Montaigne, for the contrary might be proved on him.

There is nothing else worth remark in his criticism, except that he continues for more than a column to the end, the supercilious assumption of cold superiority which alone gives such speciousness to his shallow and impudent platitudes, as enables them to injure Mr. Donnelly's book with the public. The value of this final column may be estimated by the fact that, in a large part of it, his serene thought butts about, like a summer beetle in a dim room, trying to show that the typographical peculiarities of the folio are not the conditions of a cipher, a point which distinguished cryptologists have already disposed of for him. Further on, with the lofty and compassionate air of one who would set the poor idiot right, he utters the incredible and self-evident absurdity that, unless Bacon set up the type with his own hands and then read the proofs, he could not have got a cipher narrative into the folio without letting "the whole chapel" into the secret. He says this, but he knows very well that if his own paper, the *Tribune*, accepted for print an article four columns long, every tenth word in it might make it a cipher narrative without any one in the office, from the editors to the press-boys, even suspecting its true

character. In the case put by Mr. Donnelly, let one well-paid agent, like Heminge, be charged by Bacon to faithfully see that the printers followed copy, and without his knowing anything whatever of the secret writing they were putting in type, the thing would be done. The reviewer's ensuing account of the capriciousness and complexity of the cipher method, and his utterly unwarrantable assertion that the words of the text are selected to fit a preconceived story, are plain falsifications, upon which Mr. Donnelly's subsequent disclosure of the method by which his basic numbers and their modifiers are obtained, sets an ineffaceable brand. The same disclosure brings to utter mockery the crowning folly of the article, where he impressively parades, with a sort of veneration, the conclusion reached by Mr. Jennings in the *Post-Despatch;* and declares, with an indescribable air of finality, that the cipher has been proved to be delusive nonsense by that gentleman, with his precious discovery of the concealed primary number 222, and its "buoyant and beautiful little modifier, the figure one." Considering that it has been thoroughly exploded by the facts, it is really edifying to see the reviewer's cold and uppish confidence in the bursted bladder, and his tranquil assumption that it has already destroyed the Donnelly volume. Why he should condescend to say any more after this, is not known, but he does, and actually, for a brief space, gets very mad at Mr. Donnelly, though still preserving a horrible immobility in his fury, charging that he has made of Bacon in the cipher story an archaic prototype of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde; "noble,

magnanimous, lofty-minded" in the argument, but in the cipher, "the basest, meanest, most slanderous, malevolent and sneaking of backbiters and calumniators." Phew! This touch brings to mind the scene in the *Fallen Idol*, where the abominable little image, keeping its movelessness of visage, its saturnine dead smirk, and its general impassibility, actually yowls with rage at the attempt to bury it. The spurt of epithets, which corresponds in the reviewer to this dismal cry, is all because the cipher contains incidentally, in the very spirit of history, some details of the dissolute life of Shakespeare. But what if these details are true,—and tradition certainly confirms them;—are Suetonius and Tacitus to be set down as sneaking backbiters and calumniators because they record the faults and follies of some of their contemporaries? Further on, the cipher story is characterized as a "scandalous chronicle," though it contains nothing either in quality or quantity that sets it below the immortal memoirs of Sully. Of course, what it has, of this kind, is but a very small part of the cipher story given, but the ingenuous reviewer is careful to suppress this truth, lest it might seriously qualify the appositeness of his flourish about Jekyll and Hyde.

## X.

THE somewhat extended going-over to which this one of "the best judges," credited with having killed Mr. Donnelly's book, has been subjected, in common with several of his fellow "judges," is undertaken to show what kind of men have the reviewer's privilege; and what kind of representations they dare to put

forth in condemnation of the toilsome and valuable work of a reputable author. If I were in Mr. Donnelly's place, I would publish these reviews, without comment, as a supplement to every future copy of the *Great Cryptogram*, that the reader rising from its pages (which he would with at least deep respect and probably conviction) might see for himself the glaring mendacity of their account of the book he had just perused. No comment of mine could have the force of such a contrast. The articles referred to here are samples of a number of others, equally despicable, which have been evoked by this strong and splendid volume. Most of them are nearly or quite destitute of even average literary merit, not to say of any gleam of the point and grace of manner which often adorn and half redeem the unscrupulous and shameless reviews frequent in the periodicals of Europe. They are woven of misrepresentations, and, at best, succeed only by blocking up into high relief a few petty flaws and errors, which are non-significant, and making them stand for the character of the whole work. By such tricks, which only the professional reviewer can practice, they contrive to give the reader, who is simple enough to pay any attention to them, an impression of the book such as he would never receive, even though hostile or prejudiced, from an independent perusal. This latest instance of the ability of their writers to make one thing take on the semblance of another, makes me feel, as I have been often made to feel, the sober force of Swedenborg's iron epithet, when he calls the whole tribe conjurers. False, even to utter worthlessness, as their

report of an author's work may be, it has the infernal quality of a glamour, which deceives even people of fair intelligence, and can often effect measureless injury. A gentleman who is by no means a fool, recently writes: "I was much interested in the *Great Cryptogram*, and intended to secure an early copy, but have read a very adverse review of it in one of the great New York journals and have therefore concluded not to make the purchase." Here is an instance of the practical operation of the institution. The impressive representations of an asinine Ananias, masquerading as a critic, were accepted by him without suspicion; and he was deterred from procuring a valuable book, which undoubtedly would have given him full satisfaction. Multiply the instance by thousands, and you have an idea of the injustice wrought by the system of reviewing.

The deprivation to the general reader, and the pecuniary injury to the author and publisher, are alike evident. One does not forget Emerson's radiant first volume, *Nature*, consigned to the publishers' shelves, as Theodore Parker said, for twelve years — hardly a copy of the whole edition sold — owing to the hocus-pocus of the critical representations. Who among the readers that have felt the transfiguration of that volume,— felt its effect upon the soul, as of a holy and immeasurable dawn,— would not rank it as among one of life's losses if he had been kept from its sweet influences by having received the false impressions spread abroad by periodical criticism? It is idle to lay the blame upon the reader, and say that he ought not to be unduly

affected by what the critic says of a volume. As things are, the best of us are attracted or deterred by what is plausibly reported of a book by a reputable critical journal; and can be cheated in two ways, either unjustly in its favor or unjustly against it.

As for the publishers, who are business men, I wonder that on mere business grounds they put up with the treatment they often receive from these road-agents. I personally know of one recent instance—and doubtless the instances are many—where a pile of freshly issued books was made over, every week, by the managing editor to his salaried reviewer, with strict instructions not to praise them, whatever their merit—without special instructions! Leaving the rights and interests of the author out of the question, what sort of a chance to do business has a publisher, subjected to such treatment as this? At best, even when the dice are not thus loaded, the books of whose character the public is to be informed, are at the mercy of a critic whose temper, qualifications and conditions are, like himself, unknown. Under our practice, the verdict on an eternal book, like *Don Quixote*, *Robinson Crusoe*, or *Les Miserables*, which can only be justly made by "the great variety of readers," is confided to a single, often anonymous, irresponsible man, whose dictum is to be accepted by thousands. There could be no better premium on adverse judgments. The critic may be an evil man, whose excellent digestion only stimulates his literary malignity; or he may be a good man, whose view of the work before him is poisoned by a dyspepsia which makes him feel that he has breakfasted daily

on a fried handsaw, split up the back, and a half dozen of stewed gimlets. He may be a dunce, a sciolist, a snarleyyow, a dullard, a persifleur, an ossified intelligence, a born Philistine, a man without perception or receptivity, generosity or equity; one subject to his humors, to moods of resistance or caprice, to insomnia or east winds. In any of which cases the fate of the book he is to judge, is in the hands of a citizen of Lyford or Jedburgh, and gets hanged first to be tried afterward. Now the publisher of that book has put his money in it. To him it is rightfully nothing but a commodity, which he has to sell in the worldly interest of the author and his own. Should the obscure manikin, who does the reviewing, use his unjust and tremendous opportunity and set the public dead against it, the sales are blocked, no matter what its merit; the publisher loses his investment, and the author his reward. It is a direct injury, base and unwarrantable, to a legitimate business interest; and, as I have said, I wonder that publishers put up with it. The quality of the literary commodity they offer is almost wholly a matter of opinion, and I see no equity in an institution which is arranged to sacrifice, to the mere opinion of a single writer, often venal and oftener stupid, the material interests of business men. Would any other mercantile or trading enterprise think itself fairly served by such organized raiding on its rights, or endure the pecuniary loss involved? Perhaps, however, logic being logic, this is what we must come to. To be consistent, we must see that all merchants who have wares to sell, are subjected to mendacious "literary criticism," adorned with such

rhetorical phrases of defamation as glow in the critical essays on Mr. Donnelly's volume. One eminent journal, with an audience of half a million, will keep an assassin who will devote two columns to the proposition, fluently and plausibly stated, that a respectable grocer, "through unconscious cerebration," offers for sale flour which is full of chalk. Another journal as eminent, and as widely circulated, will demonstrate in three and a half columns, that his coffee is wholly made up of roasted beans, and is "valuable only for therapeutic purposes." A third authority, widely in vogue, will have four columns to assert that being "unable to distinguish between intellectual colors," he confounds the substance of the beach with pure Muscovado, and sands his sugar. And a fourth, which reaches nearly all the population, will have five columns, to prove that after tempering the molasses with mucilage and water, he never goes up to family prayers, and is considerably worse than Colonel Ingersoll. How will the honest grocer of the future like such an instituted freedom of the press, when it thus decries his goods and hurts his business? But the grocers are safe; it is only the publishers,—agents for the authors,—for whom the case is possible. Miserable anarchist! To think that books should have the same right to unimpeded sales as groceries! To claim that a publisher's sales should not be lessened, nor an author's heart darkened, by "independent criticism!"

Better that books should never be noticed at all—better that even fine critics, like Ste. Beuve, like Emile Montegut or Paul St. Victor, like Mathew Arnold, like George Saintsbury or Professor Minto,

should break their pens and close their inkstands forever — than let continue a literary usage which intercepts the reader on his way to the volume, and turns him from it by shameful defamation. It is a usage which has become general, and has reached the dimensions of a serious harm to literature. In the case of Mr. Donnelly's important production, for one serious and honest estimate, like the just, temperate, kindly and altogether admirable notice Mr. Medill gave it in the Chicago *Tribune*, there have been fifty of the worst character. This is about the proportion of exception which exists in the infamous rule. I think the needed remedy for such a condition is to suppress the professional functionary of the critical periodicals, with his dogmatic lying oracles, and substitute the free champions of the pro and con. All the reading public wants and needs in criticism, is to hear what can be said, the stronger the better, both for and against, the product of an author's thought or imagination. The ideal of a critical journal is a publication which shall be an arena for discussion, in which all that can be uttered, on every side of a theme, shall be expressed on the single condition of proper literary ability. A journal governed by such a principle, is, I believe, demanded by the democratic genius of this country, and by all interests, including those of literature. In every domain of our national intellectual activity, the one imperative requisite is Light. To this, in literature, the present institution of reviewing is a fatal barrier.

# THE GREAT CRYPTOGRAM

## FRANCIS BACON'S CIPHER IN THE SHAKESPEARE PLAYS.

BY

IGNATIUS DONNELLY,

*Author of "Atlantis, The Antediluvian World," and "Ragnarok, The Age of Fire and Gravel."*

NEARLY all great discoveries have been received with incredulity, and it is not to be wondered at, therefore, that Ignatius Donnelly's announcement that he had found a cipher in the Shakespeare Plays should have subjected him to unfair attacks in the public journals, even though eminent mathematicians, after thorough examination, had indorsed his claims. In spite of adverse criticism, however, and on its merits alone, Mr. Donnelly's great work is steadily gaining in popularity, and eminent men everywhere, convinced by his arguments, are gradually creating a change in popular opinion. The mere fact that Prof. Elias Colbert, in his character as a mathematician, has indorsed the cipher, is a sufficient certificate of its validity. The same is true of Mr. George Parker Bidder, who is as eminent as he is unbiased, ranking, as he does, the first mathematician of England. The decisions of these men cannot rightly be regarded as *opinions.* They are the *decrees of science.*

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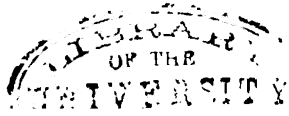

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